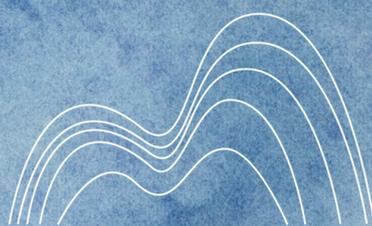


STRATEGIC PRINCIPLES 2022



SMILO
SUSTAINABLE ISLANDS

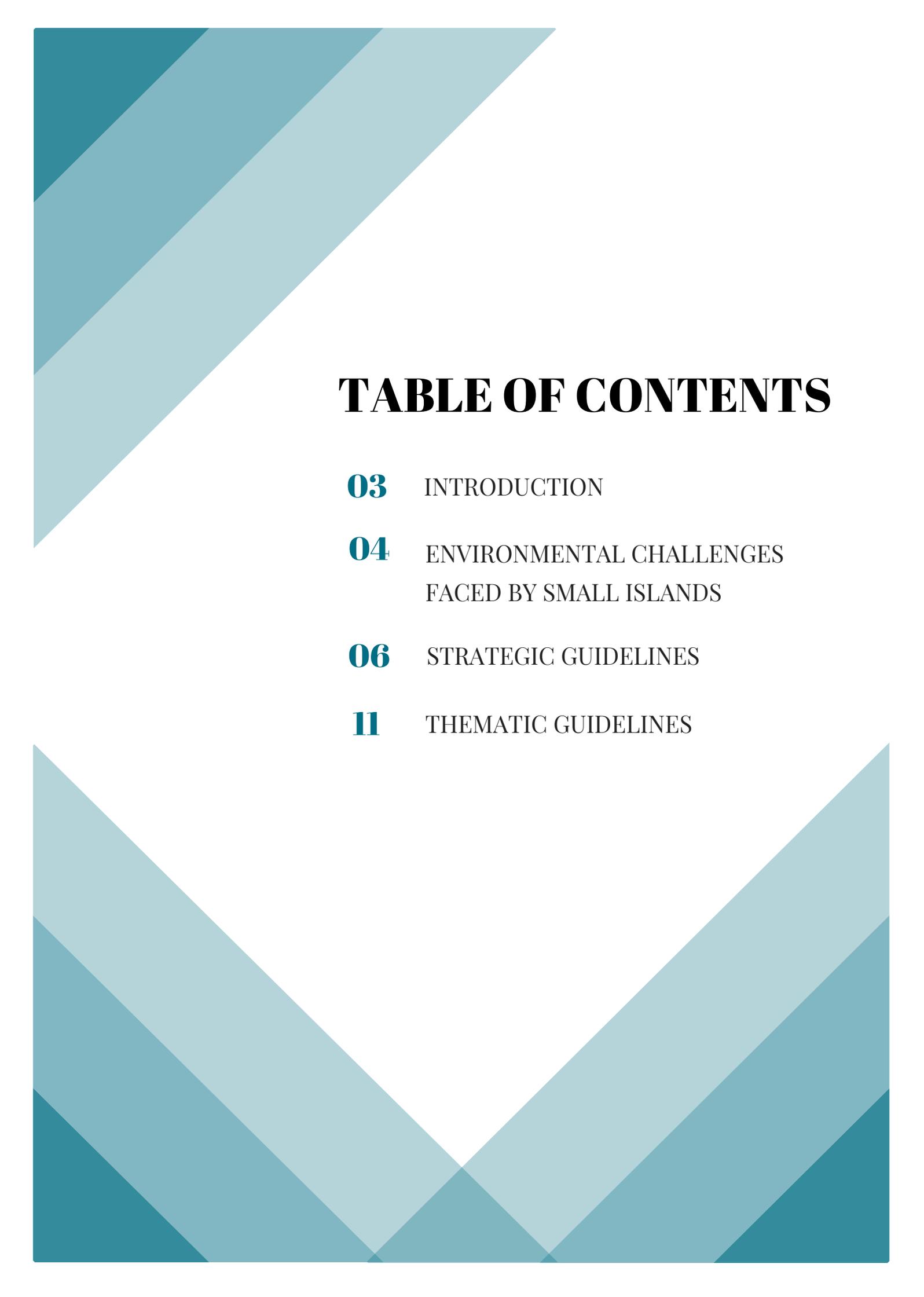


TABLE OF CONTENTS

03 INTRODUCTION

04 ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES
FACED BY SMALL ISLANDS

06 STRATEGIC GUIDELINES

11 THEMATIC GUIDELINES



INTRODUCTION

SMILO (Small Islands Organisation) supports small islands around the world on their journey towards sustainable development. With a view to reinforcing cooperation and solidarity between small islands (less than 150km²), SMILO responds to the need of island communities for interaction and support as they initiate, pursue and promote programmes to protect their environment.

This document defines SMILO's approach to the sustainable development of small islands. These Strategic Principles constitute common foundations for a shared vision of the future of the island territories members of the SMILO network. The Principles are organized into two sections. On the one hand, strategic guidelines set out the main general principles (governance, spatial planning, capacity building, sustainable funding). And on the other, thematic guidelines define the goals for each of SMILO's five themes (water & sanitation, energy, waste, biodiversity, landscapes).

The Strategic Principles echo priorities enshrined in international programmes, notably the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Paris Agreement on climate change, and the goals of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity.

The implementation of the guidelines detailed in the present document is to be tailored to the context and resources of each island (environment, geography, culture, economy, etc.) The guidelines must necessarily be adapted and scaled up or down to suit each territory. This is a reference document that will guide partner islands throughout the SMILO certification process – from creating an Island Committee to defining priority goals.

These guidelines are also the criteria on which the Assessment Committee will base its assessments when assessing the SMILO certification process on the islands. They are guidelines for assessing the dynamics of an island territory that is deploying an environment policy.

These Strategic Principles will inevitably evolve. They will be amended to reflect evolutions in the challenges facing small islands around the world.

ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES FACED BY SMALL ISLANDS

It is estimated that there are over 180,000 islands around the world (approximately 50% of which have a surface area of less than 150km²). The total jumps to one million if islets and rocks are included. The whole world recognises the importance of these unique environments: islands are exceptionally rich reservoirs of biodiversity; they are home to one third of our planet's conservation zones and protected areas. Their ecosystems are all the more important as 600 million people depend on the ecosystem services of island environments for their well-being (Convention on Biological Diversity, 2014).

Yet islands are particularly vulnerable to global changes and economic crises. Their biodiversity is jeopardised by pollution (waste, wastewater), invasive species (the impact of which, notably on land, is aggravated by a lack of connectivity with neighbouring ecosystems), climate change, the destruction of habitats and the overexploitation of natural resources (notably forests and fishery resources).

For SMILO, a “small island” measures less than 150km². It is clearly detached from the mainland at low tide without any bridges. It is inhabited, or it can be uninhabited but a resource zone for local communities. And it may or may not have protection status. Isolation, scarcity of resources, limited space, and a lack of locally available technologies – in other words, their “insular” nature – usually restricts the range of solutions available on these territories and forces local players to demonstrate adaptability and creativity. The nature-based (and usually pragmatic) solutions that exist on small islands can be a source of inspiration for other territories.

Small islands are laboratories for sustainable development and innovative solutions, be they environmental, social, regulatory or technical. Small islands share a certain number of similar challenges and they can share common solutions to guarantee their sustainable development.

“On a small island, human and environmental challenges are, by nature, inextricably linked.”

Far from being a remote experience, environmental problems are more immediate and intense in day-to-day life on an island, such as the supply and quality of drinking water, sanitation, creating an energy mix, waste management, protecting biodiversity, showcasing landscapes and heritage... This translates into the links that island communities have to develop with their environment. Their future depends on finding a balance between the natural milieu and the social milieu.

The relatively small number of actors on a small island, and the close family and community ties they nurture, can lead to a better sharing of information on these issues and foster active solidarity. However, the density and conservatism of social ties can, in some cases, have negative repercussions: passive or active resistance to the need to change, inertia, and even the exclusion of certain groups or individuals. The challenge here is to overcome resistance and manage potential conflicts about how natural resources are to be used. A balanced and jointly constructed development model is needed to protect nature, which is the island's capital and so vital in the long term. One major and all-determining challenge is to engage all actors in a dialogue that produces a shared, common vision of the territory. Another is gaining recognition for, disseminating, and constantly adapting, local practices and know-how linked to small islands.

On an island, more so than on other territories, long-term participative governance levers need to be actioned in order to guarantee sound ecological and environmental conditions that are conducive to human development. Insularity can then become a strength. Having to rely on one's own resources in a finite setting can be conducive to technical, technological and social innovation.

Furthermore, small islands that are geographically, politically and economically isolated - to varying degrees - must constantly redefine the terms of their interactions and links with the mainland. The degree of autonomy from, and collaboration with, the mainland (and with other islands in an archipelago) is at the heart of insular spatial planning challenges, such as the availability of raw materials and resources and the movement of people and goods.

STRATEGIC GUIDELINES

SMILO has defined four main sets of strategic guidelines to help islands develop in a sustainable manner and favour a balance between environment protection and human activities. They relate to: participative governance, spatial planning, capacity building within island communities, and sustainable funding for environment-protection initiatives.

I. PARTICIPATIVE GOVERNANCE

Their feeling of belonging and their island identity influence how local communities use resources and protect the environment. Island governance must take this into account (island governance being the capacity of multiple players - private, public, civil society and community organisations - jointly to define and structure collective action). Furthermore, the historical inter-dependency of islanders and their natural environment transpires in a wealth of local knowledge and know-how that calls current modes of governance into question.

Small islands face a two-fold governance challenge. On the one hand, national and local spatial planning and resource management policies do not always take island specificities into account. And on the other, even on an island, all of the actors are not always involved, or their voices heard. Youngsters, women and civil society may sometimes be excluded from local decision-making bodies - or participate without their opinions really being taken into account.

To ensure that the governance of their territory is shared, islands shall:

- **Organise the involvement of local players:** Create and nurture a platform for dialogue involving all of the island's actors, and respect the legitimacy of each one by enabling them to become deeply involved in the management of their territory and the implementation of projects that will impact it. Such structured, inclusive governance on the scale of an entire island, designed to foster capacity building among the actors, will facilitate dialogue with local and national authorities and help incorporate island-specific challenges into sectorial and spatial planning policies.
- **Work towards reducing inequalities:** Involve all actors, both male and female in an equal way, in the management of the territory and make sure that their voices are heard. Invite institutions that fight for gender equality into the debate. When bringing all of the actors together, encourage different points of view reflecting the skill-sets and responsibilities of each participant, without distinction in terms of gender or age, and make sure not to leave the poorest and most vulnerable communities by the wayside.
- **Engage in lobbying:** Create opportunities, conditions and mechanisms that will give actors on the island a platform and visibility, so that they can defend and promote their territory in a structured manner to local and national governments and international organisations.

II.

SPATIAL PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

Development planning sets out a global and strategic vision of an island's sustainable spatial development. Planning ensures a balance between protecting natural and agricultural areas on the one hand, and urban growth and the accommodation of human activities on the other.

To achieve balance between the various uses that are made of their territory, islands shall:

- **Adopt an integrated approach:** Collectively and systematically identify Strengths, Weaknesses and Opportunities, as well as the Threats hanging over the island (SWOT analysis). The goal is to define local potential and scope for improvement as clearly as possible. Define balance and break points between productive activities that rely on the island's resources and protecting nature. Identify ecological thresholds not to be crossed for each type of human activity.
- **Anticipate pressures and maintain natural areas:** Promote the balanced management of the territory and anticipate pressures that may be exerted on different types of space. Maintain protected natural areas as such. Guarantee ecological continuities and fauna/flora corridors. Clearly define the borders between productive and non-productive spaces.
- **Diversify activities:** Implement if possible a policy to diversify activities and ensure they span the entire year. In all domains (agriculture, energy, the economy, etc.) favour a "mix" rather than focusing on a single resource, as this could generate situations of dependency.
- **Reduce the impact of human activities:** Support the emergence or continuation of human activities with a small carbon footprint, activities that respect, protect and showcase nature, help combat climate change, and are also guaranteed to benefit local communities. Clean up economic activities that pollute and damage the environment, and support their transition.

- **Respect the scale of the island:** Harness technical and technological solutions that are suited to the scale of the island, making sure that infrastructures are scaled appropriately. Analyse long-term advantages and disadvantages. Anticipate challenges linked to the upkeep of facilities. Wherever applicable and relevant to the island, prefer technologies that boost the island's autonomy and reduce its dependency on the mainland in a circular economy mind-set.
- **Calculate carrying capacity:** Calculate how many visitors the island really can tolerate. Alongside physical and ecological criteria, also factor in what is socially and culturally acceptable if the environment and sense of place are to be preserved.

III.

CAPACITY BUILDING

Islands can count on a pool of local actors who are keen to get involved in managing their territory. However, these actors may not always have either the capacity or the resources that are required to follow through on their commitment and structure their initiatives to protect the island's environment. They may lack the technical skills that are needed to cope with complex environmental challenges.

Islands shall:

- **Provide training and raise awareness:** Develop a better understanding of the challenges linked to environment protection and adapting to climate change by organising training courses and awareness campaigns for schools, residents and visitors.
- **Disseminate available information:** Ensure that existing information about the island's environmental challenges and spatial planning is made available. Share and disseminate any new data that is produced. Pass on the results of studies carried out on the island, so that local players are aware of the information and take it on board.

- **Promote local skills:** Identify local know-how and skills that have a proven positive impact on the environment. Describe them in detail so they can be disseminated and built into the local decision-making process, spatial planning choices and scientific protocols.
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IV.

SUSTAINABLE FUNDING

In order to implement their policy to develop and protect their territory, island communities on small islands need access to financial resources that are sustainable in the long term.

To this end, they shall:

- **Diversify sources of funding and secure long-term and innovative funding:** Avoid being dependent on a small number of sources of funding and diversify sources. Put in place financial measures that channel revenue generated on the island into actions to protect the island's environment. For example: introduce tourism taxes, ferry taxes, money-making activities and programmes to promote local goods.

THEMATIC GUIDELINES

SMILO has identified five entry-points for addressing environment protection on small islands:

- Water & sanitation
- Energy
- Waste
- Biodiversity
- Landscapes

As all environmental challenges are intrinsically linked on small islands, SMILO encourages an integrated and transversal approach to these 5 themes.

Climate change is now impacting all countries and all islands on all continents. It is disrupting the environment, the living conditions of island communities, and economic activities. Climate change is a fundamental issue, and SMILO broaches it in a transversal manner within each of the five themes.

As far as small islands are concerned, on the one hand they need to curb their contribution to climate change, notably by reducing their greenhouse gas emissions. On the other hand, these particularly vulnerable territories must also plan for the impacts of climate change, and prepare to adapt as best they can. They need to strengthen their resilience.

Business activities that have an impact on natural resources (tourism, agriculture and fishing, for example) are scrutinized through the lenses of our five themes.

WATER RESOURCES

Some small islands frequently lack water because of their small size or their topography, a scarcity of plants on the ground, insufficient natural springs, run-off water not entering into aquifers properly, unaccommodating geology or even a lack of rainfall. All of these phenomena are likely to lead to serious water shortages.

Other islands may suffer less from a lack of water (thanks to heavy rainfall or supply via pipeline) but be faced with poor usage, or over-usage, or storage problems.

Access to drinking water on islands varies greatly. The quality of freshwater may be jeopardised by seawater entering into the aquifers, or by diffuse pollution caused by harmful farming or domestic practices or even tourist activities.



partner islands must at least:

- **Regularly assess** the quantity and the quality of freshwater resources on the island; determine the state of repair of water systems and infrastructures; and identify pressures exerted on water resources per usage.
- **Actively protect the quality of water resources**, notably by reducing sources of pollution (pesticides, fly tipping, wastewater evacuation, etc.).
- **Carry out awareness campaigns** on water efficiency and everyday ways of reducing or optimising consumption.
- **Protect water catchment basins and spots** where water is drawn, by establishing protective perimeters around them.
- If and when an island is obliged to get its freshwater from the mainland, **opt for systems that optimise transport and minimise the use of plastics** (pipes, barges with tanks, reusable tanks or drums).



the islands shall progressively:

- **Reduce pressure on water resources at source** by installing water-saving devices, dry toilets or equivalent, and suitable irrigation solutions.
- **Introduce measures to help water trickle down into the aquifers**, thus curbing soil erosion and preparing for extreme weather events.
- **Diversify freshwater supply sources**, favouring innovative, alternative methods (using non-conventional water sources, for example).
- **Satisfy minimum ecological flow requirements** in rivers, and good dynamics among sediments within coastal systems.

SANITATION

It is not infrequent for small islands without adequate sanitation to release unprocessed wastewater into seas and oceans. Said wastewater is often polluted by pathogenic agents, chemical pollutants, pesticides, chemical fertilizers and other hydrocarbons, or used oil. Negative repercussions impact the health of human inhabitants as well as that of freshwater and seawater milieus. Sewerage systems tailored to small islands need to be put in place to mitigate these impacts.



partner islands must at least:

- **Carry out a study to identify the quantity and quality of wastewater, the state of collect and treatment, wastewater spill and their negative impacts on the environment.**
- **Teach residents and visitors how to reduce pollution in wastewater systems, groundwater and the marine environment (how to dispose of domestic oils, toxic detergents, etc.)**



the islands shall progressively:

- **Upgrade existing wastewater treatment facilities and sewerage and collection infrastructures**, making sure to distance wastewater from residential areas, catchment basins and fragile ecosystems on land and at sea.
- **Put wastewater processing systems in place, ideally ecological treatments** allowing the reuse of treated water (to agricultural ends, for example, if regulations permit).
- For islands that attract lots of tourists: **scale facilities to the number of tourists**, particularly the total number of sanitary facilities.

ENERGY

When conventional energies are not available locally, many islands are obliged to use fossil fuels imported from the mainland. Such solutions render the islands dependent on the mainland and are often costly. They also have a huge ecological footprint and generate greenhouse gases, contributing to the climate disruption that claims small islands among its main victims.

In other configurations, domestic energy needs exert strong pressure on fragile island ecosystems: for example in a tropical environment, where wood is taken from mangroves for firewood or to produce charcoal.



partner islands must at least:

- **Carry out an energy diagnosis of the island**, analysing energy resources, the state of repair of the network, and the various usages (travel between the island and the mainland, hot water production, air con, heating, etc.)
- **Reduce energy consumption at source** by raising consumer awareness and using technologies that are more energy efficient.
- **Launch actions to improve the energy efficiency** of the island's infrastructures and houses.



the islands shall progressively:

- **Reduce the systematic use of fossil fuels**, and assess and take advantage of the island's potential for producing alternative energy sources.
- **Optimise ferry schedules (between the island and the mainland, between islands).**
- **Support sustainable mobility** on the island (rational use of transport fuelled by fossil fuel).
- **Foster and promote bio-climatic architecture and green building.**
- Wherever possible, **grow energy storage capacity** and control/monitor consumption with intelligent computers and tools.

WASTE

The challenges inherent in waste management, notably pollution, are accentuated on an island. Cut off from the mainland and geographically finite, islands do not have land to spare for waste storage. They lack financial resources and they do not have waste processing equipment, as the amount of waste generated on an island is often incompatible with the critical mass required to reach breakeven point (both financially and technically).

Bad waste management can lead to health problems. It can damage the soil, the water, and terrestrial and marine environments. It can undermine the quality of the island's landscapes, the appeal of the destination, and life on the island. A build-up of waste may be worsened by a rush of tourists to the island and substantial seasonal variations.



partner islands must at least:

- **Assess, detail and monitor** flows of waste generated on the island (origin, type, quantity, toxicity).
- **Reduce the consumption and wastage of resources, waste production and waste toxicity**, notably by reducing packaging and single-use items.
- **Set up infrastructures for collecting, storing and sorting** different types of waste with optimum transport solutions.
- **Regularly inform everyone on or visiting the island** about how they, too, can become eco-citizens.



the islands shall progressively:

- **Manage and process as much waste as possible locally**, adopting the recycling principles of a circular economy.
- **Facilitate the reuse of materials and products before end-of-life disposal:** favour new ways of designing, producing and consuming that extend a product's lifespan and reuse and recycle its components. Also, develop reusable alternatives to single-use items.
- **Package (compact) and export waste that cannot be processed on the island**, including hazardous waste, and **follow-up on exported waste** to ensure it is processed by specialists on the mainland.
- **Make sure that day-trippers systematically take their waste back to the mainland with them.**
- For islands that are too far from the mainland to export their waste: **store non-hazardous waste that cannot be reused** (recycled or turned into energy) or incinerate it, possibly recuperating the resultant energy. It is to be noted that the incineration process demands great skill to avoid the production of toxic fumes. Solid residue (clinker), and residues produced by treating the fumes, must also be managed.
- If the island has a port or harbour: **provide well-kept on-land facilities** where users (fishermen, pleasure-boaters) can manage their waste, notably their grey and black water.

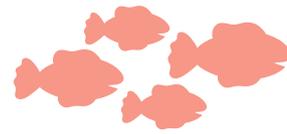
BIODIVERSITY

&

ECOSYSTEMS

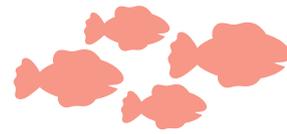
Because islands are isolated, they have a very high level of endemism (i.e. animal and plant species that do not exist elsewhere): it can be up to 9.5 times higher than on the mainland. But such outstanding biodiversity is fragile; islands accommodate 40% of endangered or critically endangered species. The decline of insular biodiversity is caused by invasive species (the impact of which, notably on land, is aggravated by a lack of connectivity with neighbouring ecosystems), the destruction and fragmentation of habitats, the over-exploitation of certain renewable resources (forests, fish resources), and the pollution of strategic ecosystems.

Climate change simply accentuates these phenomena and undermines the resilience of islands and island communities. Geographically isolated small islands are more frequently exposed to extreme weather events that are likely to damage their ecosystems. The loss of biodiversity along with damage to ecosystems have direct repercussions on islanders, as their quality of life depends heavily on natural resources and ecosystem services.



partner islands must at least:

- **Have as complete as possible an overview and understanding of habitats, biodiversity** and the overall condition of ecosystems (old data, archives, current data).
- **Launch actions to protect biodiversity** on land and in the sea **and curb the destruction of habitats.**
- **Ensure enforcement and compliance with regulations** and laws in force for the protection of biodiversity and nature.
- **Ensure that local populations and visitors are aware** of the importance of the island's biodiversity and of the “do's and don'ts”, and clearly display information about the ecosystems on the island.



the islands shall progressively:

- **Deepen their knowledge about habitats and marine and terrestrial species** (inventories) and how they evolve, whilst regularly monitor heritage species.
- **Ramp up initiatives to protect terrestrial and marine biodiversity**, notably by creating effective protected zones paired with the necessary management resources, or putting in place conservation strategies for heritage species.
- **Encourage business activities that are not detrimental to ecosystems (agriculture, fishing, forestry, etc.)** and practices and know-how that are conducive to biodiversity.
- If the island attracts, or hopes to attract, tourists: support **responsible tourism** by respecting and involving local communities, promoting biodiversity and outstanding ecosystems, and showcasing local know-how.
- Carry out **ecological restoration and engineering projects** that build up resilience, restore damaged natural habitats, and mitigate the effects of climate change.
- **Prevent the introduction of invasive species; monitor, and carry out control and/or eradication campaigns on terrestrial and marine invasive species**, based on the results of studies and surveys.

LANDSCAPES

The notion of landscapes at SMILO encompasses an island's natural heritage and its tangible cultural heritage. The landscape is the visual identity of an island, its sense of place. The landscapes on small islands are often outstanding and shaped by human activity. Landscapes bear witness to the tenuous link between nature and culture, giving form to local know-how and practices. Landscapes are strong identity markers for island communities and visitors (remarkable trees, vegetation, crops, coastlines, etc.)

An island's tangible cultural heritage is another visual identity marker. It bears witness to the island's history and must be protected.



**partner islands
must at least:**

- **Carry out an analytical diagnosis of the island's visual identity,** including the state of conservation of its natural and cultural heritage (such as knowledge, practices and know-how).
- **Launch actions to protect landscapes and tangible cultural heritage.**
- **Provide local populations and visitors** with information about the island's heritage.



**the islands shall
progressively:**

- **Ensure that new facilities blend into the landscape**, and do the same with existing constructions, embracing the fundamental notion of a sense of place.
- **Implement schemes to protect and restore** damaged natural spaces and emblematic components of tangible cultural heritage.
- **Showcase the local landscaping know-how** that shapes the island's high-heritage-value landscapes.