



The Island Biodiversity Coalition brings island governments and partners together to accelerate island-led climate and biodiversity action and strengthen global recognition of island stewardship of critical ecosystems.

Key Messages from the 6th Island Biodiversity Coalition Meeting

25 March 2026

Island Biodiversity Coalition Meeting

The meeting highlighted both the growing urgency of addressing island biodiversity loss and the strategic opportunity to elevate islands as leaders in global biodiversity, climate, and ocean agendas. Across discussions, there was strong consensus that while islands remain disproportionately vulnerable, they are also critical providers of global public goods and must be repositioned accordingly in policy, financing, and implementation frameworks.

In this context, the Island Biodiversity Coalition (IBC) is being shaped as a strategic coordination and action platform to revitalise implementation, strengthen advocacy, and align financing approaches to support island-led biodiversity outcomes and global commitments, including 30x30.

1. Transitioning to Long-Term, Island-Appropriate Financing

A central and recurring theme was the urgent need to move beyond short-term, project-based funding cycles toward long-term, scalable, and predictable financing mechanisms.

- The Best Life 2030 initiative highlighted the narrow window to influence upcoming EU financing frameworks (notably the 2028 MFF), underscoring the need to secure sustained biodiversity funding for island regions before current mechanisms expire.
- Participants emphasized that no single financial instrument is sufficient, and effective financing strategies must combine:

- Grants (still essential, especially for early-stage and capacity-constrained contexts)
- Conservation Trust Funds (CTFs) for long-term, stable financing
- Blended and catalytic finance approaches where appropriate
- There was strong caution against applying externally designed financial tools that do not reflect island realities, capacities, or governance contexts.
- Philanthropic capital was identified as important for risk reduction and innovation, but long-term sustainability continues to rely on traditional and public funding sources.

Key message: Financing must be context-specific, diversified, and designed for durability, enabling sustained implementation of biodiversity commitments.

2. Addressing Fragmentation Through Coordination and Alignment

Significant fragmentation was identified across both financing systems and programmatic efforts, limiting effectiveness and impact.

Insights from the Erik Davies from the Office of the Pacific Ocean Commissioner on Pacific Ocean Finance Week reinforced that:

- Donor landscapes are highly fragmented, with inconsistent priorities and access pathways
- Regional coordination is insufficient, leading to inefficiencies and missed opportunities
- National and regional capacity constraints hinder access to available funding

Proposed responses included:

- Establishing coordinated regional mechanisms (e.g., Ocean Finance Group)
- Improving transparency and tracking of finance flows
- Strengthening collaboration to reduce competition and duplication among island states

Key message: Improved coordination is essential to unlock existing resources, improve efficiency, and scale impact.

3. Strengthening a Unified Advocacy Narrative

A strong call emerged for coherent, collective advocacy to elevate island priorities in global processes.

- Participants emphasised reframing islands as:
 - Biodiversity custodians and innovators
 - Providers of global environmental public goods
 - Leaders in implementing integrated ocean–climate–biodiversity solutions
- There is a need to align messaging toward key global milestones, including:
 - CBD COP17
 - COP31
 - Other major international forums in 2026
- Planned outputs include:

- One-page advocacy briefs and messaging packages
- Consolidated narratives integrating biodiversity, climate, and ocean agendas
- Shared platforms (e.g., MIRO board) to coordinate messaging and engagement

Key message: A unified narrative is critical to increase political visibility, influence global agendas, and mobilize resources.

4. Positioning the Coalition as a Coordination and Implementation Platform

The IBC is increasingly positioned not only as a convening space, but as a functional platform for alignment, collaboration, and implementation.

Core roles include:

- Aligning diverse initiatives (e.g., Best Life 2030, Ocean Finance efforts, Trust Fund networks)
- Facilitating knowledge exchange and joint action
- Identifying synergies and opportunities for collaboration across regions and stakeholders
- Supporting the development of practical tools and shared resources

This represents a shift from fragmented engagement toward a more structured, coalition-driven approach.

Key message: The IBC is evolving into a catalyst for coordinated action and implementation at scale.

5. Elevating Conservation Trust Funds and the Island Trust Alliance

Conservation Trust Funds (CTFs) were consistently identified as cornerstone mechanisms for sustainable island biodiversity financing.

- The Island Trust Alliance has been formalized as a community of practice to:
 - Promote peer learning and exchange of practical experience
 - Strengthen collective advocacy for island-specific finance solutions
 - Build institutional capacity and governance models
- Insights from peer learning highlighted:
 - The long-term nature of trust-building in financing systems
 - The importance of community engagement and governance structures
 - The need to document and share lessons to guide both practitioners and donors
- There is growing alignment between the Alliance and broader coalition efforts to:
 - Amplify the role of CTFs in global financing discussions
 - Position them as tested, scalable solutions for long-term conservation finance

Key message: Institutional financing mechanisms, particularly CTFs, are essential to bridge the gap between commitments and sustained implementation.

6. Integrating Legal and Policy Advocacy

Emerging legal and policy tools are being leveraged to strengthen island influence in global decision-making processes.

- This includes:
 - Engagement with CBD and UNFCCC processes
 - Use of ICJ advisory opinions and legal frameworks to support island positions
 - Participation in preparatory workshops and policy dialogues
- These approaches aim to:
 - Enhance political recognition of island biodiversity contributions
 - Improve access to financing and decision-making spaces
 - Strengthen the legitimacy of island-led priorities within global frameworks

Key message: Legal and policy pathways are increasingly important levers for systemic change and global recognition.

7. Strategic Preparation for 2026 Global Milestones

The coalition is actively preparing for a series of high-impact international events in 2026, which represent critical opportunities for influence.

These include:

- Our Oceans, Kenya (side events proposed by Caribbean)
- Pacific Pre-COP for UNFCCC
- CBD COP17 (Armenia)
- COP31 UNFCCC
- Additional global forums (e.g., climate weeks, ocean summits, scientific symposia)

Strategic objectives for these engagements:

- Showcase two decades of island-led conservation impact
- Mobilize political commitments and partnerships
- Advance financing solutions tailored to island contexts
- Reinforce islands' role as leaders in achieving global biodiversity targets

Efforts will be supported through:

- Coordinated advocacy materials
- Shared planning tools and communication platforms
- Active collaboration among coalition members

Key message: 2026 represents a strategic window to elevate island leadership and accelerate global commitments, particularly 30x30.

8. Cross-Cutting Insights

Across all discussions, several consistent insights emerged:

- Islands must be repositioned from vulnerable recipients to strategic global actors

- Financing systems must be redesigned to reflect island realities and long-term needs
- Coordination and alignment are currently insufficient but critical to success
- Trust, governance, and local ownership are fundamental to effective implementation
- Learning, documentation, and knowledge sharing are essential to scaling solutions

Conclusion

The meeting reaffirmed that achieving global biodiversity goals—particularly 30x30—will not be possible without island leadership, innovation, and implementation.

The Island Biodiversity Coalition is uniquely positioned to:

- Revitalise and catalyse implementation strategies for island biodiversity
- Support achievement of global conservation commitments
- Strengthen advocacy and influence within CBD and related global processes
- Align financing, policy, and on-the-ground action through coordinated approaches

By bridging fragmented systems, amplifying island voices, and advancing practical, long-term solutions, the IBC can play a transformational role in shaping the future of global biodiversity conservation.

Closing Notes:

Next Meeting: April 29th, 2026

Video Link & Attachments

1. [Meeting recording](#) and Passcode: &?Z4HWqR