

An aerial photograph of a tropical island. The left side shows a dense forest of palm trees. A narrow strip of white sand beach runs along the coast. The water is clear and turquoise, revealing a complex coral reef system with various shades of brown and grey. A small, round structure is visible on the beach.

*REPORT:*  
**THE VIRTUAL **  
**ISLAND SUMMIT**

**September 7-13th 2020**



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2020 edition of the Virtual Island Summit focused on the theme, 'Sharing knowledge for resilient, sustainable and prosperous islands worldwide'. The free and entirely online event connected global islands to share their common experiences, ideas, solutions and good practices through a digital platform.

With over 10,000 registrations and over 100,000 sessions views across all platforms, the Virtual Island Summit is one of, if not the biggest online event for sustainable development in the world. Representatives from over 500 islands participated from places as diverse as the Caribbean, Pacific, Arctic, Patagonia, Europe, Asia, the Indian Ocean and beyond. Attendees were from a broad range of backgrounds representing entrepreneurs, public sector, NGOs and academia.

This makes the Virtual Island Summit a unique opportunity to build "digital bridges" between some of the world's most remote locations and break down some of the silos that can impede change. The Virtual Island Summit is a catalyst for action.

- **James Ellsmoor**, Director of Island Innovation



**10,000+**  
Registrations



**100,000+**  
Views Across All  
Platforms



**100+**  
Articles and  
Features



**4,815**  
Public  
Conversations



**2,761**  
Private  
Messages Sent



**223,723**  
Desktop  
Pageviews



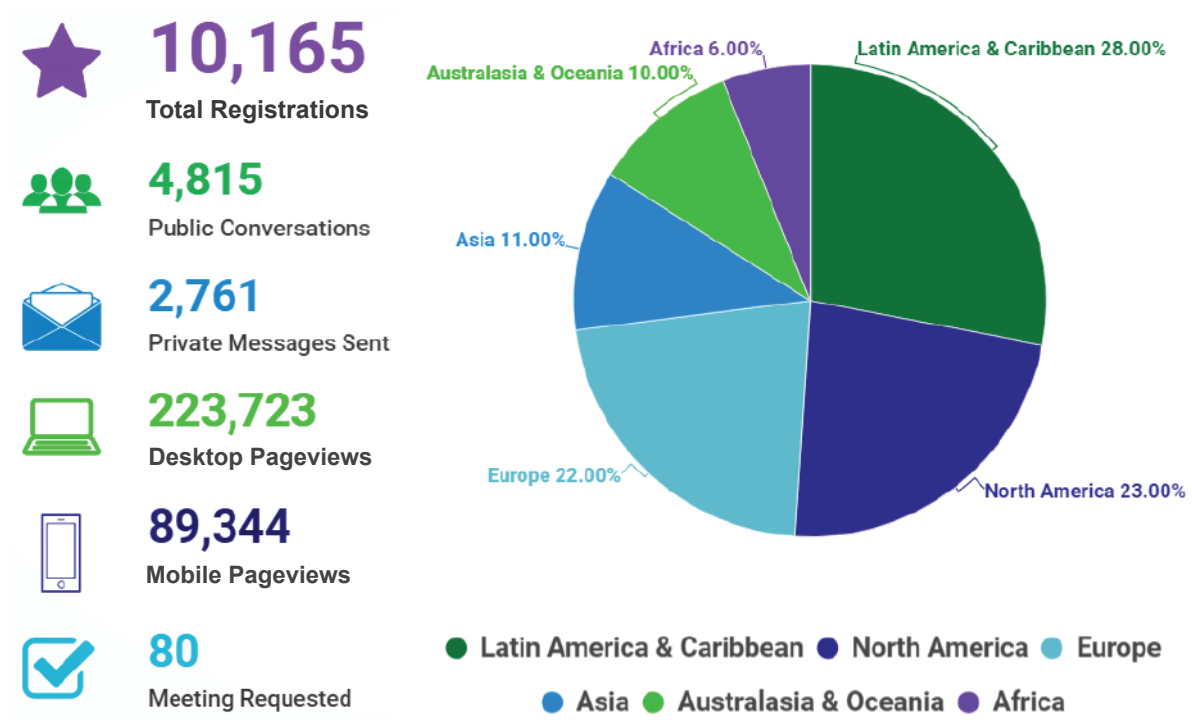
**89,344**  
Mobile  
Pageviews



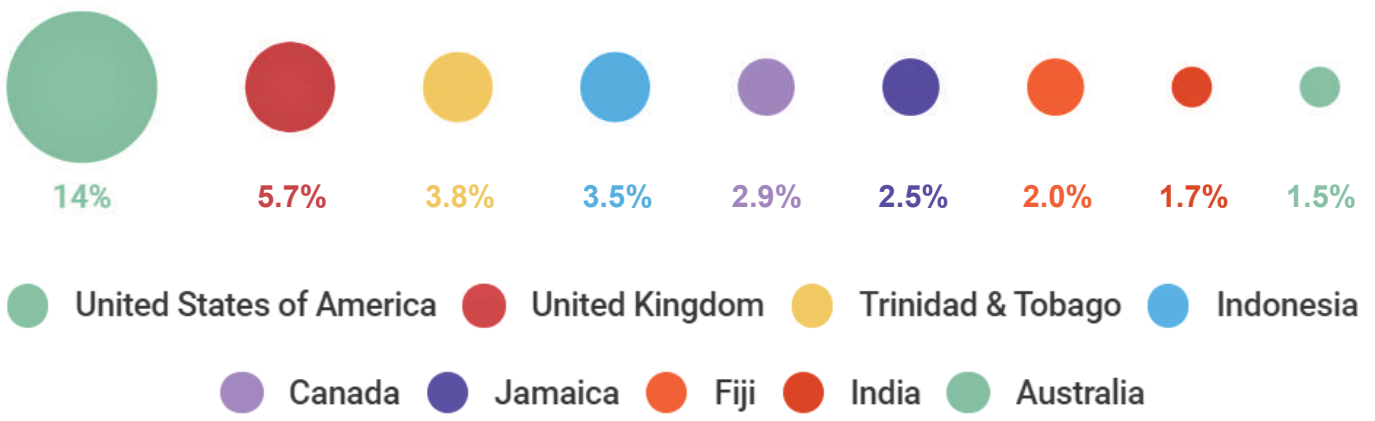
**80**  
Meetings  
Requested

We had 10,000+ registrations from 500+ island communities, representing every corner of the globe:

### Audience by Region



### Top 9 Countries Registered at the Summit



# This event brought together sponsors and partners from every continent:

## 21 Sponsor Organisations



## 39 Partner Organisations



[See all Partners & Sponsors >](#)

# REPORT: The Virtual Island Summit 2020

## Introduction

Island Innovation is a social enterprise and digital media company at the intersection of sustainable development and communications. We bring together the private sector, government, NGOs and academia to advance innovation for sustainability in island communities worldwide.

We would like to sincerely thank everyone for attending the second annual Virtual Island Summit. The event brought together more than 10,000 people worldwide, who were connected remotely and participating in more than 45 sessions throughout the week.



**Dr. Irfaan Ali, President of Guyana**

*"I am pleased to participate in this Virtual Island Summit 2020. It provides small states - especially small island states - with a platform for the exchange of experiences in their progression towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)."*

**The first edition of The Virtual Island Summit** was held from October 6 to 11 2019 and we had more than 4,000 participants. The event was designed to connect global islands to share their common experiences around ideas, good practices and solutions, through a digital platform.

**The second edition of Virtual Island Summit** took place from September 7 to 13 2020. More ambitious goals were set and these were fully exceeded.

Due to COVID-19, we were forced to frame the Summit within the context of the global pandemic. This changed the dynamic of the conference by encouraging more participants to try virtual events, but the proliferation of other virtual events this year also raised attendees' expectations. By creating a community around the event and focusing on action, the Virtual Island Summit stands out as a global event with strong local connections.

The Summit included 176 [speakers](#) this year, an increase of 50 in comparison to 2019. They were as diverse as Prime Ministers, Presidents, Ambassadors, founders of large and small companies, academics, and youth leaders, and also included the participation of various island musicians who performed at the closing ceremony.



Frank Bainimarama ✓  
@FijiPM

It was a privilege to open the [@IslandsInnovate](#) Virtual Summit. In Fiji, we see ourselves as an incubator for innovation. That is what all islands have the potential to be — incubators for the big blue and green ideas that can be scaled up around the world.



Island Innovation 🌴 y 2 más

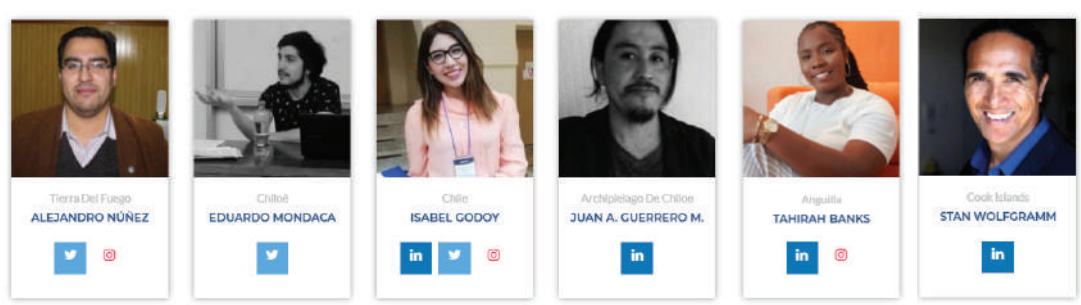
**Frank Bainimarama, Prime Minister of Fiji**



## 178 Island Innovation Ambassadors

The Ambassador program was new in 2020. It connected our global summit with island communities to help push the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on the ground, make our content accessible to all and drive tangible action.

Our enthusiastic team of Ambassadors helped to promote the Virtual Island Summit on their island and feed back the latest news and innovation. They are the local face of Island Innovation, building relationships with local stakeholders and media to accelerate the vision of this international network.



[Meet all the Ambassadors >](#)

If you would like to be involved as an Ambassador in VIS 2021, please do not hesitate to reach out and discuss ideas for partnerships.

**GET INVOLVED IN VIS 2021**



# We accomplished all 5 Virtual Island Summit Goals:

**1. Connectivity** proved to be successful when the physical boundaries are removed through technology. Similar conferences often fail to offer equal opportunity to all the interested parties and individuals; the Virtual Island Summit 2020 was able to bring over 10,000 speakers and attendees from over 500 island communities from around the world.

**2. Interaction** was at the core of the mission. Most of the sessions were characterized by attendees raising their questions to the panel of experts. Many sessions featured live polls where attendees could participate and provide relevant demographic information, and the chatbox allowed communication among attendees in addition to networking opportunities.

**3. Free access** marked a strong participation of multiple sectors such as private and public sectors, academia and NGOs. The registration process allowed a simple and quick manner to sign up for all the sessions of the Summit.

**4. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** were a key theme throughout Virtual Island Summit. The event was able to explore public participation experiences on different islands to inform SDG-related policies, strategies, and legislation.

**5. Continuity** of the conversations is important for talk to turn into action. The sessions covered a wide range of island-related topics and discussion does not need to end after the sessions are over. Participants are encouraged to continue to interact with the Island Innovation community by using the [Facebook Group](#) and [LinkedIn Group](#).

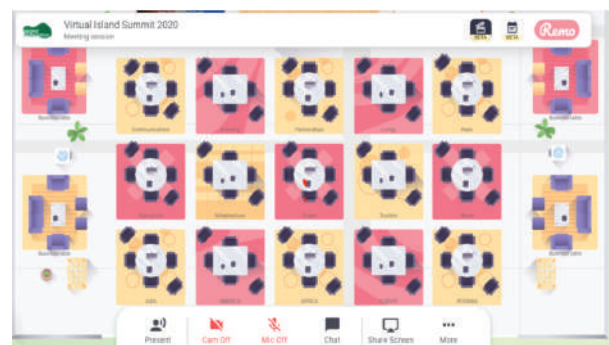
We are proud to say that we have accomplished all 5 of these goals both years of the Summit and look forward to continuing to do so next year at the Virtual Island Summit 2021.



# In addition to the features of last year's Summit, this year we added:

- A new, **interactive platform** that allowed participants to meet and engage with one another regardless of their physical location.
- 4 **Virtual Trade Shows** which allowed attendees to directly interact with sponsors, connect with leading organisations, and maintain contact after the Summit.
- 7 **Network+ Sessions** that centered around sustainability solutions and created networking opportunities that will continue beyond the Summit.
- **Multiple languages and live interpretation**, which offered French and Spanish-speakers a more inclusive experience.

[CLICK HERE TO SEE THE FULL AGENDA](#)

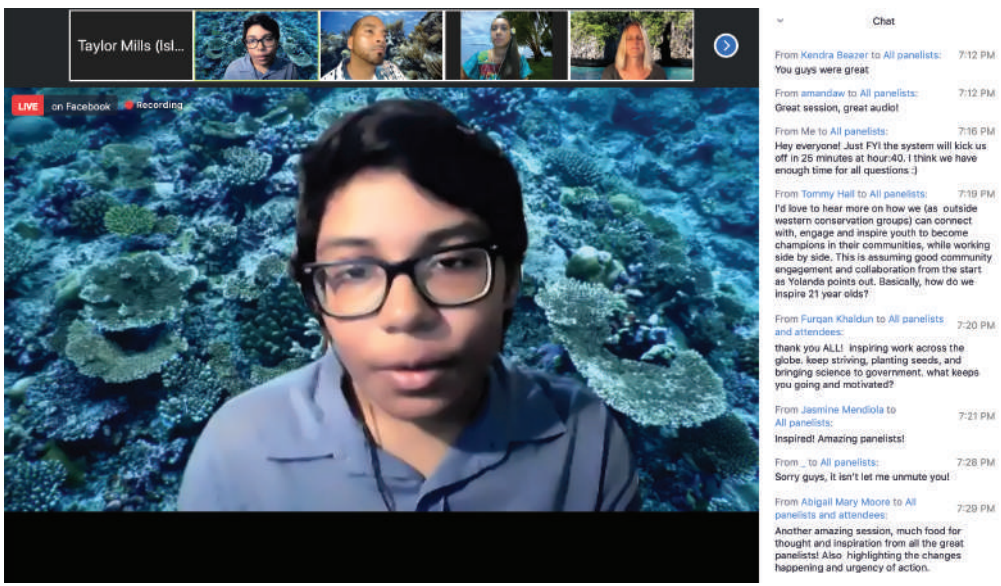


# We are proud to have received an overwhelmingly positive response from participants for the second year in a row:

- 94% of participants say that they are ***“glad they participated in the Summit”***
- 83% of participants say the Summit ***“met my expectations”***
- 83% of participants say that they ***“enjoyed content and speakers”***
- 90% of participants say that they ***“would attend our next event”***

We incorporated your feedback from the VIS 2019 into this year’s event in order to make it a success. We also learned a lot from hosting the Summit a second time and are going to use your feedback to make next year’s event even better.

Thanks to your constructive feedback, we are able to continue to improve the Summit each year!



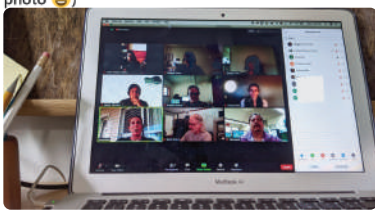


# We had thousands of people from all over the world document their Summit experience on social media using #VirtualIslandSummit:

**Shayla Elick** @ShaylaElick  
 We also joined in down the road at the #StHelena National Trust. Really enjoyed learning more about the work of colleagues in the South Atlantic, well done all!  
 @SAERI\_FI @FalklandsGov @StHelenaGovt @st\_inside @IslandsInnovate @tara\_pelembe



**Maggie J. Whitten Henry** @MaggieJWHenry  
 Just wrapped up a brilliant 8-week 'How to Create a Successful Virtual Event' course with @jellsmoor @IslandsInnovate!  
 Super valuable experience and highly recommend to anyone + everyone involved in virtual events!  
 (The quality of the course far outweighs that of this photo 😊)



**Vanessa Toré** • 2nd  
 Director Foreign Economic Cooperation at Ministry of...  
 We had a great session! Thank you James Ellsmoor of Island Innovation for a great Virtual Island Summit! Curaçao can offer solutions to other islands, countries and cities! Check out the websites below for more information.  
<https://lnkd.in/emym7-3>  
<https://www.ibis-management.com/>  
<https://omega-engineer.com/>  
<https://www.dcsx.cw/>  
<https://lnkd.in/ehGvwn4>  
 #Island2Island #export #internationaltrade #technology #curaçao #innovation #investmentpromotion

**Sukey Cameron** @SukeyCameron  
 Really interesting session on the #VirtualIslandSummit @IslandsInnovate "Local Government Roundtable" with panel from @norfolkisland #Reunion and #ChathamIslands. Many of their issues similar to ours in #Falklands @FalklandsGov.



**Emma Lewis** @Petchary  
 An inspiring talk this evening with young grassroots activists on marine protection, community engagement, local knowledge, much more. #HometownHeroes #Oceans #Islands Here's @YolandaJoabMori - #Micronesia in the house! @jellsmoor @IslandsInnovate #VIS2020 #VirtualIslandSummit



**Gov. Lourdes A. Leon Gu...** 2:04 AM  
 to James  
 You are very welcome and thank you for your efforts. We do have to make this a continuing concern for the future. This is the way to adapt to changing events. Island Sustainability is critical to the livelihood of our people.

Thank you  
 Governor Lou

**Tine Custodio G.** @kustodio  
 Wow, this could be the answer to bridging #DigitalDivide in the Philippines and anywhere else in the world - Solar Powered Educational Learning Library. Already piloting in the #Pacific and #Caribbean.  
 Learning at #VirtualIslandSummit :)



**Umida Stelovska** • Following  
 The Future Is Clean Economy.  
 Thank you James Ellsmoor and team for organizing this virtual summit. Important topics, great speakers and network!

We are already living Climate Change and it is already impacting the inter-islands physically and economically. Now is the time for everyone to prepare what is coming along the way to make sure that we transform to Clean Economy. We now will need public-private-investor-science sector engagement more than ever and work collaboratively to achieve success in our efforts.

#climatechange #climatesolutions #migration #sustainability #circulareconomy #carbonfree #cleaneconomy #impactinvesting #VirtualIslandSummit

**st\_inside** @st\_inside  
 Inside St Helena was privileged to be part of @IslandsInnovate #VirtualIslandSummit, #StHelena panel panel yesterday

'Innovation + Sustainable Development in the South Atlantic' was discussed co-hosted w the #Falklands.

Note BTS pic of laptop malfunction - power switch was off!



**Greenfield Writers** @Greenfieldwrite  
 No, don't miss it. I learned so much last year that gave me prompts for improving my business. Learning how to navigate change requires knowledge of the context and climate. This event is the place, completely free. #islandeconomies #islandsustainability #foodsecurity #COVID19

**Island Innovation** @IslandsInnovate · 7 sept.  
 Last chance to join us at The Virtual Island Summit 2020! mailchi.mp/021b19716745/w...

**Candida Rodriguez** @CandidaRodrigz  
 Happy to connect with other islands across the globe to learn and share commonalities via the Virtual Island Summit. The timing of this digital platform for islands couldn't be more perfect. @jellsmoor



**Maggie J. Whitten Henry** @MaggieJWHenry  
 Just wrapped up a super engaging panel and discussion with @IISUPEI as part of @IslandsInnovate #VirtualIslandSummit.  
 Grateful to be able to work 'backstage' fielding questions for a panel of brilliant island scholars from around the world – from the comfort of my deck! Bonus! 🌞





## Participants enjoyed the interactive nature and diversity of speakers and topics. Your favourite parts of the Summit included:

- “How the sessions were run -- **I felt I could contribute through chat and have my voice be heard** (my questions for the most part were answered). Thank you.”

- “The **variety of speakers/topics** and the **homely/organic feel** of the musical/art closing session.”

- “How **upfront and personal it all felt** online. You could not get as close of an **intimate feeling with all speakers and guests** if at a live event.”

- “The **enthusiasm for change** in the most difficult of circumstances.”

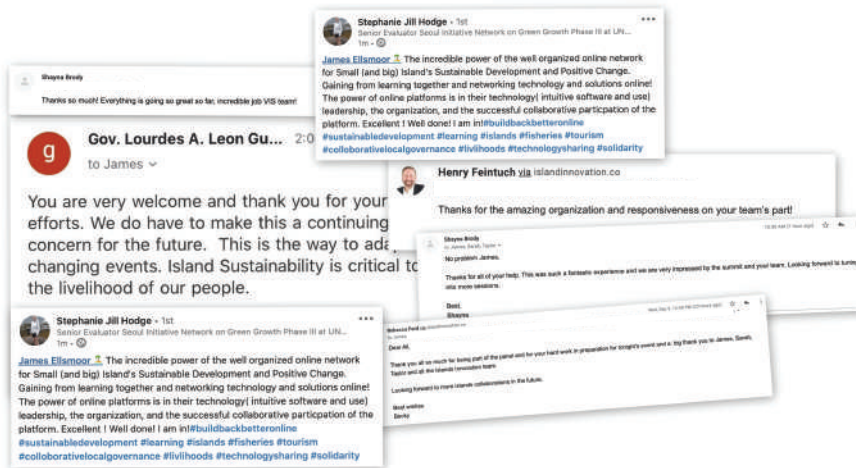
- “**Connecting with experts** and seeing **sustainability from a multi-stakeholder point of view.**”

- “Learning about hundreds of wonderful islands, many of them I will know only virtually, their great people and listening to a **highly diverse group of speakers.**”

- “Listening to experts **I would otherwise not have access to.**”

- “The chat. It's **interactive** nature complete with moderation by James and team provided a counterpoint to the presentations and Q&A.”

- “The potential knowledge from listening to various speakers, and of course the Summit was **not restricted to privileged few** (unlike in conventional summits). **I was able to communicate and do some networking.**”



- "I got to **interact with other islanders** which was fun ... the attendees were very nice and welcoming. that made me feel more **comfortable to interact** with them and **exchange ideas and knowledge.**"

- "That through **contacting other islands** my own island's issues can be addressed **more effectively** as often the problems have already been addressed and so **the solution on my island can be better.**"

- "There are **many ways of addressing problems**, and we **all learn from other examples.**"

- "The speakers brought such **passion and insight**. Loved the fact it was so **international** with exceptional **racial and gender inclusion** for those presenting at the sessions."

- "**Shared global connections**, plus it prompted us in our country to host a virtual hub event and I hope this network will **connect more to VIS next year** and a **global network.**"

- "There is **so much to learn from each other** and try to **connect to make things happen** for us (island communities), as often on world issues/stages we might feel isolated/alone in our setting/particular circumstances."

# The Summit had a large global reach and was covered by over 100 publications around the world in many languages including:

## The Summit reached well over 100 publications globally!



**BECOME A MEDIA PARTNER FOR VIS 2021**



# THE VIRTUAL ISLAND SUMMIT



## A partial list of our 2020 media coverage:

1. [ABC Radio Australia](#)
2. [Afloat Podcast \(Ireland\) \(1\)](#)
3. [Afloat Podcast \(Ireland\) \(2\)](#)
4. [Afloat Podcast \(Ireland\) \(3\)](#)
5. [Africa Science News](#)
6. [Andaman Chronicle](#)
7. [Andaman Sheekha](#)
8. [Andaman Express](#)
9. [Antigua Observer](#)
10. [Bernews](#)
11. [Breaking Belize News](#)
12. [Bretagne Développement Innovation](#)
13. [CARILEC](#)
14. [Cayman Compass](#)
15. [Cayman Islands Government Office London](#)
16. [CCREEE](#)
17. [China.org.cn](#)
18. [Coast Monkey](#)
19. [COTRI China Outbound Tourism Research Institute](#)
20. [Curaçao Chronicle](#)
21. [Devex \(1\)](#)
22. [Devex \(2\)](#)
23. [Dominica News Online](#)
24. [Eco Chic Cayman](#)
25. [El Isleño \(Colombia\)](#)
26. [Emo News Dominica](#)
27. [Entertainment OverDose](#)
28. [FBC News](#)
29. [Fiji Broadcasting Corporation](#)
30. [Frontline Islands & Cities](#)
31. [Galway Daily](#)
32. [Galway Advertiser](#)
33. [GISuser](#)
34. [Global Diaspora News](#)
35. [Government of FSM](#)
36. [Grassroots Radio](#)
37. [Guidehouse Insights](#)
38. [IISD](#)
39. [Insider Travel Report](#)
40. [Irish Tech News \(1\)](#)
41. [Irish Tech News \(2\)](#)
42. [Irish Tech News Podcast](#)
43. [Kiko Ta Pasando](#)
44. [Largs&Millport](#)
45. [La Voix Acadienne](#)
46. [Les Nouvelles Calédoniennes](#)
47. [Loop News Caribbean](#)
48. [Loop News Jamaica](#)
49. [Marianas Variety](#)
50. [Martha's Vineyard Times \(1\)](#)
51. [Martha's Vineyard Times \(2\)](#)
52. [Martha's Vineyard Times \(3\)](#)
53. [Martha's Vineyard Times \(4\)](#)
54. [Médiaterre](#)
55. [MercoPress](#)
56. [MNI Alive](#)
57. [News784](#)
58. [Newsbreak](#)
59. [NLA International](#)
60. [One News Page](#)
61. [Orange Madagascar](#)
62. [Pacific Island News Association](#)
63. [Parapolitikakritis](#)
64. [Petchary's Blog](#)
65. [Planetary Press](#)
66. [The Press and Journal](#)
67. [Radio New Zealand](#)
68. [Radio New Zealand \(2\)](#)
69. [RCI Martinique](#)
70. [RTP Madeira](#)
71. [Saint FM \(1\)](#)
72. [Saint FM \(2\)](#)
73. [Saint Helena Government](#)
74. [Scottish Islands Federation](#)
75. [Shetland Times](#)
76. [SocialWhirl](#)
77. [teleSUR English](#)
78. [The Daily Express \(1\)](#)
79. [The Daily Express \(2\)](#)
80. [The Daily Express \(3\)](#)
81. [The Daily Express \(4\)](#)
82. [The Echo of India](#)
83. [The Fijian Government](#)
84. [The Fiji Times \(1\)](#)
85. [The Fiji Times \(2\)](#)
86. [The Future Impact Show Podcast](#)
87. [The Jamaica Gleaner](#)
88. [The Orcadian](#)
89. [The Orkney News](#)
90. [The Phoenix Post](#)
91. [The Royal Gazette](#)
92. [The Source US Virgin Islands](#)
93. [The St. Helena Independent](#)
94. [The St John Source](#)
95. [Times of Malta](#)
96. [Travel Writers Radio Podcast](#)
97. [Tristan News Abroad](#)
98. [UKOTA](#)
99. [University of the Highlands and Islands](#)
100. [Xinhuanet](#)
101. [Xinhuanet Asia & Pacific](#)

**BECOME A MEDIA PARTNER FOR VIS 2021**

# Leading experts offered diverse perspectives and solutions on pressing sustainability issues:

**Over 100,000 session views across all sessions**

<b>Panel Session:</b> <i>Grand Opening – Eastern Hemisphere</i>	<b>Panel Session:</b> <i>Grand Opening – Western Hemisphere</i>	<b>Panel Session:</b> <i>Press Conference</i>
<b>Panel Session:</b> <i>Film Screening Of UNCIVILIZED</i>	<b>Panel Session:</b> <i>The Sustainable Development Movement: A Catalytic Force Changing The Trajectory Of Development</i>	<b>Panel Session:</b> <i>Towards Sustainable Island Futures: Comparing Small Island States and Subnational Island Jurisdictions – A Report</i>
<b>Panel Session:</b> <i>Hometown Heroes: Encouraging Local Champions For Ocean Protection</i>	<b>Panel Session:</b> <i>Plenary Session – Island Collaboration and Planning for the Future</i>	<b>Panel Session:</b> <i>Clean Energy Development and Integrated Resource Planning in Island States</i>
<b>Panel Session:</b> <i>Meet Ellen, the Future of Clean Maritime Transport</i>	<b>Panel Session:</b> <i>Island 2 Island Solutions: Curaçao's Technology Driven Companies</i>	<b>Panel Session:</b> <i>Shining To The Future: Islands As Lighthouses Of Innovation</i>
<b>Panel Session:</b> <i>Democracy In The Islands: Political, Issue &amp; Public Affairs Campaigns</i>	<b>Panel Session:</b> <i>Gestion Intégrée Des Ressources Naturelles Et Développement Durable Des Petites Îles (Integrated Management Of Natural Resources And Sustainable Development Of Small Islands)</i>	<b>Panel Session:</b> <i>Intelligent Energy Solutions For Isolated Territories: The Ushant Case Study</i>
<b>Panel Session:</b> <i>The Caribbean Utility Model: A Drive Towards Sustainability And Resilience</i>	<b>Panel Session:</b> <i>Further Education And Preparation For Work</i>	<b>Panel Session:</b> <i>Stand Up and Be Counted: Using Data to Build Island Resiliency</i>
<b>Panel Session:</b> <i>Technology and Innovation Policy for Island Sustainability</i>	<b>Panel Session:</b> <i>Innovation and Sustainable Development in the South Atlantic</i>	<b>Panel Session:</b> <i>Political Roundtable Of Island Leaders On Responses To COVID-19</i>
<b>Panel Session:</b> <i>Climate Change, COVID-19 And The Caribbean – Civil Societies Role In SIDS</i>	<b>Panel Session:</b> <i>Local Government Roundtable (English session)</i>	<b>Panel Session:</b> <i>Island Responses to the COVID-19 Pandemic</i>
<b>Panel Session:</b> <i>Brexit and Beyond: Global and Local Challenges in the UK Overseas Territories</i>	<b>Panel Session:</b> <i>Local Government Roundtable (Spanish Language Session)</i>	<b>Panel Session:</b> <i>The Next Generation Of Island Leaders</i>
<b>Panel Session:</b> <i>Closing Ceremony</i>	<b>Panel Session:</b> <i>The Future of Virtual Events</i>	

**CLICK HERE TO ACCESS ALL SESSION RECORDINGS**

# VIS Hubs: Case Studies

## 1) Martha's Vineyard

In order to find new opportunities and potential solutions from island communities around the world, the **Vineyard FutureWorks and Strategy Innovation** teams came together to form the **Martha's Vineyard Discovery Team**. This strategic group has sought to meet with Island Innovation to explore new ways to make an impact both for their community as well as to support the Island Innovation team in organizing future activities.

Vineyard FutureWorks considers this “experiment” to see if participation in the Virtual Island Summit would create value for the island and to be a critical success in envisioning the Vineyard's future. Vineyard FutureWorks then took the lead in recruiting a group of local island volunteers and introducing the Discovery Process for its implementation aimed at inspiring and accelerating the sustainability of organizations and communities, both globally and locally.

### The Discovery Process:

- To provide an overview of the Virtual Island Summit and its week-long schedule of events.
- To introduce the Discovery Process as one of identifying intriguing “insights” from the Summit that could serve to produce new ideas for development on Martha's Vineyard.
- To encourage islanders to participate in the Summit sessions, encouraging open-mindedness, entrepreneurial mindset, active listening, and developmental thinking.
- To encourage the formation of group “Discovery Pods,” where team members could get together and listen for insights and ideas related to a specific area of their interest, such as climate change, pandemic relief, transportation, etc.





## 2) Saint Helena and the Falklands Islands

The islands of the South Atlantic rarely feature in international events. They span vast distances and have very small population sizes, yet their isolation arguably drives innovation and there are many examples of island-led innovation in the region.

This year's Virtual Island Summit focused on Innovation and Sustainable Development in two islands in the South Atlantic, St. Helena and the Falkland Islands. The panel comprised of technical specialists and politicians, who showcased some exciting case studies from these islands showing how, with populations of 4,000 (St. Helena) and 3,000 (Falklands), knowledge economies are being developed that include the export of technical skills globally; renewable energy goals are being set that have the potential to be world leading, and there are exciting new connectivity projects being implemented.

This session focuses on innovation and sustainable development on two islands in the South Atlantic. Topics addressed during the session included:

- Development of a knowledge economy in small islands: SAERI case study in the Falkland Islands.
- Renewables in remote islands: Falkland Islands.
- Business and connectivity in the South Atlantic.
- Education that allows sustainable development in St Helena.
- St Helena: towards 100% energy production from renewable energies.

Since St Helena Island to date had not had any confirmed cases of Covid-19 since the beginning of the pandemic, islanders organized a physical event at St Helena Community College, where they offered their community access to all sessions, facilitating the connectivity drawbacks and maximizing the information delivered to people during the Summit.

In order to continue this joint partnership and expand collaboration in the South Atlantic region, the **Saint Helena Research Institute** and the **South Atlantic Environmental Research Institute** are hosting a post-Summit discussion forum. This event will reflect on the innovations, knowledge sharing and outcomes of the Virtual Island Summit and opportunities to capitalize on future benefits.



**Speakers came together in Saint Helena to present the island's approach to innovation and sustainable development.**

## Continue the conversations started at the summit and keep in contact with fellow attendees with these networking opportunities:

- [Virtual Island Summit 2021](#): Save the date for the next Summit, taking place September 6 – 12, 2021.
- [Weekly Newsletter](#): You are all set to receive Island Innovation's weekly newsletter, covering important topics around sustainability.
- [Facebook Group](#): Connect with fellow Summit participants in our exclusive Facebook Group.
- [LinkedIn Group](#): Connect with fellow Summit participants in our exclusive LinkedIn Group.
- [Podcast](#): Learn about *The Island Innovation Podcast* coming soon!

We look forward to your continued involvement in the Island Innovation community!





An aerial photograph of a tropical coastline. The top left corner shows a dense forest of palm trees and other lush greenery. A narrow strip of white sand beach runs along the edge of the forest. The rest of the image is dominated by clear, turquoise water that transitions into a darker blue as it extends towards the bottom right. The water's clarity reveals the sandy bottom and some coral reef structures.

***THANK YOU***

***FOR MAKING THE VIRTUAL ISLAND SUMMIT  
2020 A SUCCESS - WE COULDN'T HAVE  
DONE IT WITHOUT YOU!***