12. Conclusions

The agility and versatility of UAVs as data collection platforms stand to significantly improve the availability of timely spatial data to small island countries. UAV technology should be harnessed to further improve resilience, risk reduction, and disaster response work in small island contexts. To ensure that this work can go forward, adequate capacity building, training, and preparation are needed. This Guidance Note has discussed the most important factors to take into account in using UAVs and UAV technology effectively.

Given the myriad of options available for platforms, software, and sensors, there exists no one-size-fits-all approach to UAVs. Instead, interested parties are encouraged to experiment with various systems and configurations while also building on best practices. The field is rapidly and constantly evolving; as new technology becomes available, it opens up new possibilities and optimizations in this work.

Last but not least: while the innovation around UAVs is surely exciting and experimentation is encouraged, the safety of airspace users and those on the ground is of utmost importance and should always take precedence over other objectives. Any serious UAV operator or user of UAV technology should seek professional training in how to fly responsibly in the relevant airspace. Exemplary and careful use of the technology will help build trust among the public, governments, and private sector and help ensure that UAV technology and related innovations can be used for beneficial applications going forward. Every operator has a role to play in shaping a responsible community of UAV operators.

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