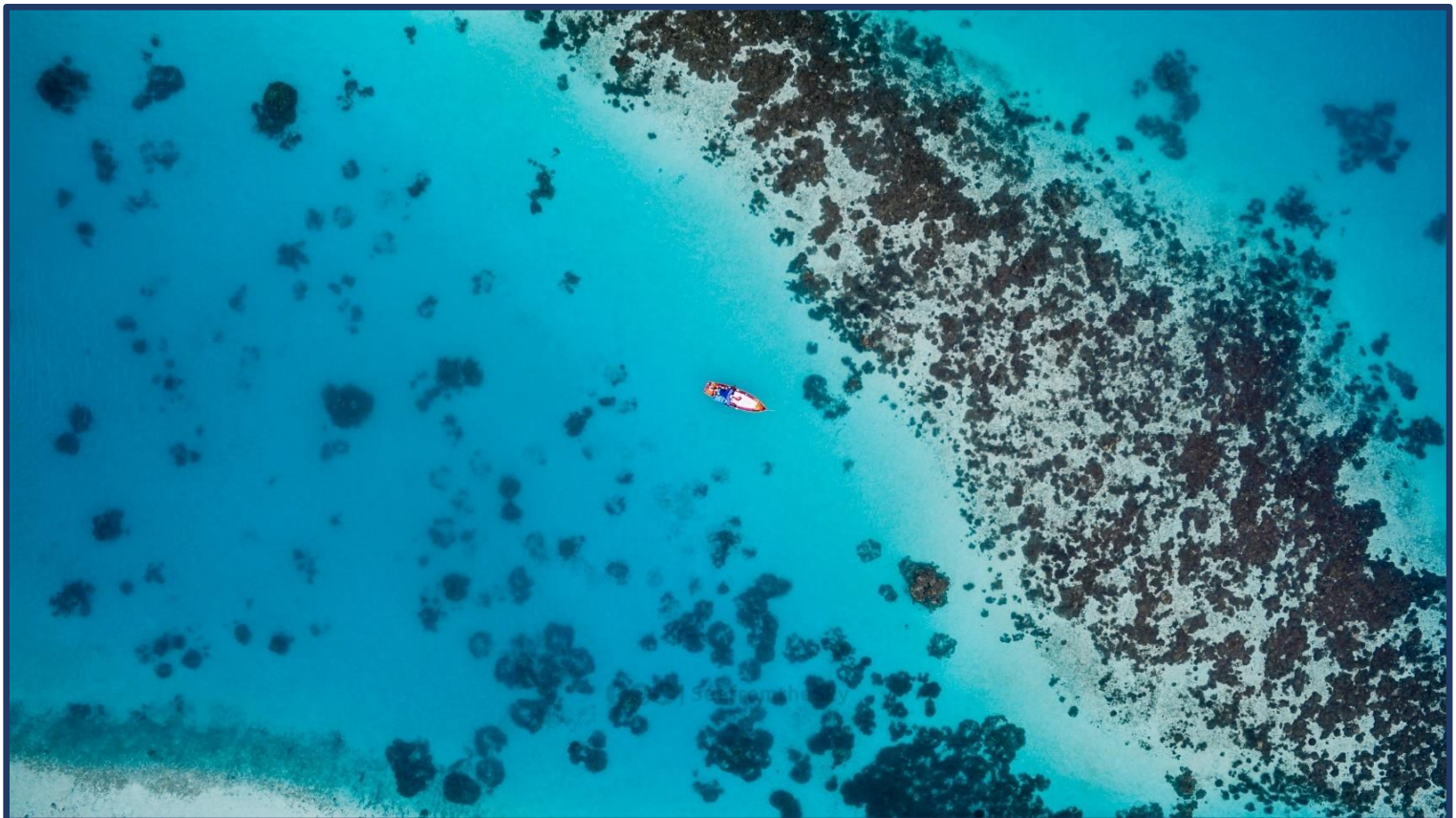




MALDIVES SDG ROADMAP

United Nations mainstreaming, acceleration and policy support (MAPS) engagement



February 2022

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization of Migration
MAPS	Mainstreaming, acceleration and policy support
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDS	Small Island Developing State
SME	Small -and medium-sized enterprise
TVET	Technical and vocational education and training
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Fund
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNODC	United the Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and to build upon and strengthen efforts towards improving the policy environment, systems and mechanisms in the country, the Government of Maldives, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, requested the United Nations to collaborate on a Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support (MAPS) engagement. Responding to this request, the United Nations deployed officials from nine United Nations entities, who, working under the leadership of the Maldives United Nations Resident Coordinator, provided support to the Government of Maldives and other stakeholders to articulate an SDG Roadmap for the country, which is presented herein.

This SDG Roadmap is expected to assist Maldives to i) mainstream the SDGs into development planning processes at national, sectoral and decentralized levels and ii) identify entry points for accelerating SDG progress. The SDG Roadmap provides a framework and recommendations for accelerating the realization of the SDGs in the Maldives, anchored in national policies and priorities. The SDG Roadmap also discusses policy and institutional frameworks for driving such efforts, financing and the data ecosystem. Finally, the SDG Roadmap outlines a stakeholder engagement strategy to support its implementation and to promote a whole of society approach to the SDGs in Maldives.

Accelerating progress on the SDGs in Maldives

The SDG Roadmap developed an acceleration framework that combines a multidimensional approach across the SDG pillars of People, Planet, Peace and Prosperity, combined with an in-depth analysis of three national priorities of economic diversification, building resilience and decentralization using a systems thinking approach that focuses on understanding the way that constituent parts (nodes) of a system are interrelated and work together as a whole, over time. Systems are bound together by the relationships of cause and effect; their behaviour results from reinforcing and balancing processes which keep the system in equilibrium. In this context, a principal element of systems thinking is understanding the way elements in the system feed backward and forward between one another. The approach is used to identify 'leverage points' for intervention susceptible to contributing to system change.

The analysis was informed by a consultation process with national stakeholders, notably members of the SDG Technical Committee and a stakeholder survey to expand the reach of the engagement to as large a group of interested parties as possible, considering the limitations of virtual engagement made necessary as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Maldives is a successful development story. Economic growth combined with the expansion of social services, connectivity and infrastructure development has allowed the country to sustain poverty reduction, socio-economic progress and human development over the past 30 years. Nevertheless, the country faces several emerging challenges to realize the SDG for **People** by 2030 as per the SDGs.

While income poverty in Maldives is relatively low, almost a third of the population is poor across several dimensions. Moreover, inequality is a growing concern and a barrier to sustainable development with significant disparities in access and quality of services, as well as livelihood and opportunities for the population in Malé and atolls.

Maldives has almost completed its demographic transition with the bulk of the population being of working age. This important shift in the demographic structure compounds the already high costs of social spending associated to geographic fragmentation and dispersed populations and will increase the long-term sustainability pressure on the development model prevalent in the country

As a Small Island Developing State (SIDS), Maldives is highly vulnerable to climate change and other environmental hazards. The resilience of its economy and society depend to a significant extent on natural resources, thus the **Planet** pillar of the SDGs takes on special importance for the country. Weaknesses in the systems for environmental assessment, planning, management and enforcement put at risk the ability of Maldives to sustain balanced development in the future. Moreover, climate change and other environmental impacts disproportionately affect the poor because they have less resources and social and financial support for their survival. Maldives needs to move towards circular economy approaches to better integrate the value of environmental goods and services in policy- and decision-making.

The **system analysis on building resilience** shows pathways for enhancing integrated planning, evidence-based policymaking, transparency and accountability to better protect the natural environment upon which the economy and society depend. Importantly, public engagement and participation in local development decisions is identified as a leverage point for building resilience in the country because it highlights the active involvement of local communities in decisions that affect their day-to-day lives. Institutionally, it stresses the importance of a sound and effective decentralization process. Resilience does involve the development of infrastructure; however, during the consultations, concern was expressed about uncontrolled land reclamations and an over-emphasis on “hard” infrastructure like harbours and airports. Such development needs to take into account creation of new vulnerabilities, for instance through damage to protective ecosystems or locations that are vulnerable to storms and rising sea levels. Additionally, with limited human and economic resources, the capacity to maintain and adequately staff installations must also be a concern, with the consequence that consideration could be given to a model based on cooperation and resource-sharing among islands. The elements (nodes) in the system serve to highlight the social dimension of resilience, shown by the importance of building social capital and cohesion for strengthening economic livelihoods and community resilience building.

Maldives is a young democracy whose institutions need to evolve and be strengthened to consolidate the democratic transition. In this context, supporting effective, transparent and accountable institutions takes up special importance for the country. The most important challenge for Maldives in sustaining **Peace (and Good Governance)** is a lack of confidence in state institutions among the population, especially the young, which can undermine the social contract and democratic participation. This situation is driven by systemic corruption and a lack of accountability mechanisms, further undermined by an ineffective judicial system, lacking a culture of independence. These aspects have direct effects on the ability of the population, especially the most vulnerable and those living in atolls, to access quality social and other services and opportunities.

Renewed interest and support to decentralization, which brings power, decision-making and resources closer to citizens, opens an opportunity to address some of these issues. Maldivians expect decentralization to enhance access and quality of services and create livelihood and other opportunities across the country. But for the decentralization process to deliver on its potential, challenges identified need to be addressed.

The **system analysis on decentralization** allows these challenges to be made explicit and identifies points for intervention to promote change in the desired direction. In this respect, the system analysis identified the node of Policy and Regulatory Framework for Decentralization as a leverage point because it defines the decentralization model and the powers and responsibilities of actors at distinct levels of governance and highlights the space for civil society and other key actors in decentralization. Because confusion remains about what the legal and regulatory frameworks allow local councils to do

and the responsibilities of stakeholders in the decentralization process, intervening in this node to clarify these issues will help advance the decentralization process. Weaknesses in the policy and legal frameworks for national planning represents a challenge for ensuring vertical coherence. Local councils find it difficult to align island development plans with the national plan in the absence of a clear institutional planning system through which various levels of planning can be articulated.

The analysis similarly shows the important role of training and capacity development for decentralization actors to allow them to participate and hold local councils and the central government accountable for development results and to be able to contribute effectively to service provision. Addressing this limitation is essential if the decentralization process is to close participation and accountability gaps in Maldives and it is thus identified as a leverage point. The use of digital technologies provides opportunities for enhancing capacity and avenues for participation by citizens and thus it is a priority to enhance access to digital technologies and skills to support the decentralization process and the expected benefits of such a process for development results.

The ability of local councils to exercise their functions and provide services to local communities remains limited due to a lack of financial resources. The local council grant that has been paid to councils for the last two years covers recurrent costs, such as salaries, but is not enough for development programmes, and the capacity to mobilize resources varies across island councils based on resource endowment (e.g., availability of land to lease) and other factors of a historical or contextual basis. The devolution of responsibilities to local councils should go hand in hand with measures to strengthen their ability to raise revenue in a way that considers context specificities to achieve equitable results.

The most important challenge to Maldives' long-term **Prosperity** is the vulnerability of its economy and social system to external shocks, which has been deepened by an increasing dependence on a high-end tourism model. While the one-island-one-resort model has generated large revenues, it has not created enough decent jobs for Maldivians. The model is also dependent on imports, foreign capital and foreign labour. Maldives rapid economic growth fueled by large tourism arrivals, urbanization and population growth have a strong impact on the environment.

The **system analysis on economic diversification** allows visualizing the relationship between the main economic sectors for economic growth and diversification and the natural environment and the pathways of influence that policymakers and other economic actors can use to avoid or at least mitigate negative environmental impacts of economic growth. The system diagrams similarly show that economic growth and diversification will not automatically lead to more opportunities for youth and the vulnerable population, but that efforts are necessary to enhance skills and qualifications of the Maldivian population to part take in such opportunities.

Going forward, Maldives needs to transition to a sustainable, inclusive and resilient economy, building on its marine resources. To achieve this, the country needs to support sustainable economic diversification articulating a strategy for the blue economy which integrates economic, environment and social objectives in a harmonious way.

Recommendations to accelerate progress on national priorities and the SDGs

The 2030 Agenda for sustainable development is broad and ambitious. The acceleration framework in the SDG Roadmap highlights focus areas across the SDG pillars that require attention in Maldives and zooms in on specific points for intervention, referred to as "leverage points," to accelerate progress on the three key national priorities (economic diversification, building resilience and decentralization) while advancing the SDGs.

As discussed later in this report, according to system scientist Donella Meadows (see Box 2), a certain hierarchy exists among leverage points and considerations for their use to bring strategic change in a system needs to be carefully assessed, taking into consideration interactions across different type of leverage points. For instance, intervening in mid to shallow leverage points might create the conditions for more difficult, but higher impact, leverage points to propel the system in motion. In certain circumstances. In deciding on a strategic approach and direction for accelerating sustainable development in Maldives, it was important to identify nexus leverage points, meaning leverage points that are shared by the three key national priorities. While the way leverage points manifest in each system varies (for instance, the leverage point on policy, institutional and regulatory frameworks may involve different line ministries and legal instruments depending on the specific issue at hand), the functions are similar across systems. The MAPS engagement identified six nexus leverage points: i) policy, institutional and regulatory frameworks; ii) quality and availability of training and education; iii) leadership and management capacity of government at all levels; iv) digital connectivity, technology and digital literacy; v) community engagement mechanisms and participation in local development decisions; and vi) women's empowerment, engagement and participation.

The recommendations that follow synthesize the knowledge acquired through the MAPS engagement. In the main body of the report, each recommendation is presented according to the relevant SDG, with specific indications of the nexus leverage points most closely associated with them. Further engagement with stakeholders to take forward the recommendations presented below can use the system approach to assess the type of leverage point recommendations represent and how they can be sequenced for better outcomes. Another variable to discuss is the time lag for system interventions to produce results, which can also inform sequencing and prioritization over time of particular actions.

The SDG Roadmap recommendations for acceleration are:

- ✓ Embrace an inclusive and holistic approach to the development of a sustainable blue economy to leverage ocean and marine resources towards inclusive and long-term development.
- ✓ Accelerate the shift of the tourism sector towards more inclusive and sustainable development models that promote sustainable production and consumption and circularity in the tourism sector.
- ✓ Improve the local ecosystem, infrastructure and support services for small- and medium-sized enterprises with a particular focus on youth- and women-led enterprises.
- ✓ Enhance the employability of young Maldivians through skills development and smooth education to work transitions.
- ✓ Leverage the power of digital technologies for sustainable development.
- ✓ Empower women to participate in the economy and public life, protecting human rights and gender equality.
- ✓ Reform the social protection system to effectively protect people from deprivations and address inequality.
- ✓ Systematically adopt a circular economy approach to guide policy responses to waste management in Maldives.
- ✓ Strengthen the institutional capacity for environmental management, including monitoring, assessment and enforcement capacity.
- ✓ Strengthen the decentralization governance framework and develop the capacity of local councils to discharge their responsibilities.
- ✓ Strengthen participation and accountability mechanisms at the community level.

Policy and institutional framework for acceleration

The SDGs represent a shared global agenda to tackle the most pressing challenges of our time across countries while promoting inclusive and sustainable development leaving no one behind. To achieve SDG-aligned policy integration in practice, countries need to establish adequate development planning and institutional frameworks, coordination and monitoring and evaluation systems to assess performance against targets through a whole of government and society approach.

Available analyses suggest that the Strategic Action Plan for Maldives has integrated relatively well many of the SDGs and targets, with coverage estimated at 88 percent. Nevertheless, work remains to be done in the localization of certain SDGs and targets and the customization of relevant indicators to the Maldivian context. In addition, the Strategic Action Plan represents a medium-term plan, thus lacking anchoring in a more long-term development vision for the country. The articulation of a long-term perspective is important considering both the nature of sustainable development aimed at transformational change in the economy, society, environment and governance, which take time, and the specific Maldives' context of a highly contested polity at risk of significant policy U-turns through election cycles on commitments that are otherwise necessary to be sustained over time to achieve sustainable development. This is a particular challenge for the multi-generational timeline of payoffs from investing in human capital.

The realization of a national vision and the SDGs would benefit from the articulation of a development planning system that identifies responsibilities and parameters of an inclusive and holistic process. [Such an overarching legal framework can facilitate addressing identified gaps and overlaps in critical domains such as decentralization, and provide coherence to the development planning process.](#) The Ministry of National Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (MNPHI) started the process of establishing such a system by working on the formulation of a National Development Planning Act, and consultations are on-going. Filling this legal and institutional gap is critical to facilitate the alignment and realization of the SDGs in Maldives. This becomes increasingly urgent in the context of enhanced decentralization.

Maldives has established structures for SDG coordination, but they suffer from lacunae in the development planning system and capacity constraints. The main weaknesses are that monitoring and coordination of the SDGs is done outside of the core mandates of the government and other actors involved in the Strategic Action Plan and weak coordination across government. The Strategic Action Plan foresees an institutional framework for managing its own implementation. It is unclear to the MAPS team, however, whether such a structure is fully operational. Nevertheless, the Strategic Action Plan makes no reference to the SDG coordination process. Ideally, the Strategic Action Plan institutional framework should be the anchor of SDG monitoring, coordination, evaluation and reporting processes.

The MAPS team recommends strengthening the national development planning system in Maldives and anchoring SDG localization, monitoring, coordination and evaluation in the system.

SDG financing

Maldives has embarked on the formulation of an Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF) which will lead to the definition of an overarching SDG financing strategy for the country. Considering the on-going work on the INFF, the MAPS engagement puts forward several considerations that arise from the analysis of acceleration of the SDGs in Maldives and its implications vis-à-vis the financing context in the country.

High public debt accumulation and debt servicing costs constrain Maldives' ability to finance recovery from COVID-19, climate change and broader development objectives. Maldives faces a triple crisis

with a deep economic contraction resulting from COVID-19, increasing fiscal and debt pressures and significant funding needed to invest in mitigation and adaptation measures to climate change now and in the future. Rising fiscal imbalances represent a risk to stability.

The government has been actively managing the risk associated with its debt profile and joined the G20 Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI), which deferred debt service payments from official bilateral creditors. With the 2022 national budget allocating Maldivian rufiyaa (MVR) 2.9 billion for debt repayment commitments, the discussion is open about the need for debt reprofiling. Against this background, the government may consider the feasibility of using innovative financing instruments and debt-for-climate or debt-for-nature SWAPs helping to better align the economic model to the sustainability aspirations of the blue economy and the SDGs more broadly. A similar approach can be used for new public debt by linking debt commitments to specific sustainability commitments through SDG or other thematic-focused commitments (e.g., green or blue bonds). Under these instruments, proceeds finance projects that advance sustainable development according to a clear pre-established development framework and monitoring and reporting procedures that show to investors how proceeds contribute to the stated development objectives.

Efforts can also be stepped up on improving efficiency and effectiveness of public spending to enhance sustainability and promote better development outcomes. The main drivers of budget deficit and public debt over the past five years have been large public infrastructure projects and social spending, including food, water and electricity subsidies and expenditures on Universal Health insurance. Concerning capital investment projects, efforts can be made for better appraisal and selection of projects which would require capacity development in line ministries beyond the ministry of finance. In relation to social expenditures, efforts can focus on rationalizing general subsidies and tackling inefficiencies in existing programmes, such as health insurance. This will create some fiscal space, which together with other measures as part of efforts to address fiscal imbalances, can support the strengthening of the social protection system as suggested in this SDG Roadmap, with a focus on assisting the poor and most vulnerable and closing gaps in protection, taking into account the needs of an aging population.

Improving linkages between national development planning and public investment and budgeting will enhance transparency and accountability, aimed at improved performance. The Maldivian government is working towards the introduction of programme budgeting as part of wider public management reform. This process is helpful in aligning public expenditures on development priorities and to assess performance. This process can be complemented by adding an SDG-lens for assessing the budget, performance and SDG reporting.

The MAPS team recommends considering initiating an SDG budgeting exercise embedded in the Integrated National Financing Framework process and aligning debt commitments to sustainable development outcomes. The latter implies both considering the feasibility of innovative mechanisms, such as debt-for-climate or debt-for-nature SWAPs, for existing debt that may be reprofiled and issuing SDG or other thematic bonds, such as green or blue bonds, subject to a rigorous process of monitoring and reporting of the use of proceeds and development results for new debt commitments.

Data ecosystem

Reliable, quality and timely statistics are essential for evidence-based policy- and decision-making. The Maldivian statistical system performs below its potential, considering the country's income level. According to the Statistical Performance Index (SPI) of the World Bank, Maldives—with an overall score of 52.9 on a scale of 100—performs below the average for South Asia and upper middle-income countries and, among global scores, places in the second quintile from the bottom. Especially low

scores are received in data services, which are significantly below the performance of peers. Indicators for statistical system performance relate to the quality of data releases, the richness and openness of online access and the availability and use of data access services, such as secure microdata access. Maldives defined a vision for improving its data ecosystem through 2030 by adopting a National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) 2021-2030 and the Statistics Act enacted in 2021 that addresses weaknesses.

Several initiatives have been undertaken to enhance capacities in monitoring and reporting on the SDGs within the broader context of enhancing capacities to monitor implementation of the Strategic Action Plan and other policy frameworks in the country. The localization process has led to an analysis of data requirements for the Strategic Action Plan and the SDGs and identification of priority SDG indicators based on the global framework, gaps in the existing data availability and need for indicator customization.

The MAPS team recommends strengthening the national statistical system of Maldives according to the vision defined in the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (2021-2030) and the monitoring and reporting of the SDGs to 2030. This involves, among others, strengthening the capacity of local councils and communities to contribute to data collection and review processes and ensure their participation in relevant discussions on data needs and dissemination. Also, it is important to enhance the collection of disaggregated data, including gender disaggregated data.

Stakeholder engagement strategy for the SDG Roadmap

The Government of Maldives has made significant efforts to engage with its stakeholders towards the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development but faces many challenges. These challenges include a mistrust of public institutions, a divided political context and uneven access to communication technologies. The Government of Maldives' commitment to strengthening the decentralization process and democratic governance unlocks opportunities to engage stakeholders in building their communities. There is also an active civil society and IT-savvy, educated youth population which played important roles in COVID-19 recovery.

Engagement that empowers the public can help to strengthen public service delivery, while building capacity for civic participation in public life. Promoting the buy-in and whole-of-society approach required for transformation and building partnerships for localized delivery on the 2030 Agenda, will require moving beyond consultation towards collaboration and empowerment. The SDG Roadmap outlines three interlinked strategies for deepening engagement in the delivery on the national development priorities and the SDGs and a set of activities under each stream to be led by the relevant government entities with the support of development partners, professional facilitation and partnership of specific civil society entities, as far as possible. The three strategies are the following: i) invest in strengthening social consensus, awareness and social solidarity around critical and complex challenges and opportunities facing Maldives; ii) engage stakeholders to strengthen accountability of governance structures for service delivery and provide a basis for structured engagement with local government authorities; and iii) strengthen the infrastructure for engaging stakeholders, both internal and external.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Government of Maldives, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, requested the collaboration of the United Nations to deploy a mainstreaming, acceleration and policy support (MAPS) engagement that could build upon and strengthen ongoing efforts in the country towards improving the policy environment, systems and mechanisms that support implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its core Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Responding to this request, the United Nations deployed a team of officials from nine United Nations organizations and agencies – the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), United the Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) – which, working under the leadership of the United Nations Resident Coordinator to Maldives, provided support to the government and other stakeholders to articulate an SDG Roadmap for the country.¹

The SDG Roadmap, presented herein, is expected to assist the Government of Maldives to: i) mainstream the SDGs into development planning processes at national, sectoral and decentralized levels; and, importantly, ii) identify opportunities for accelerating SDG progress.

The MAPS engagement, which took place in a virtual setting because of the COVID-19 pandemic, involved a series of consultations with national stakeholders – including, notably, members of the National Technical Committee for the SDGs. These consultations took place in September, October and November 2021, facilitated by the Ministry of National Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (MNPHI) through the SDG Coordination Unit. These consultations were essential for the MAPS team to learn the perspectives of key stakeholders on critical challenges and opportunities facing the country and to exchange views. The MAPS team also conducted a stakeholder survey to amplify the reach of the engagement and to overcome the limitations of distance imposed by the virtual nature of the mission.

The product of the MAPS engagement is the present Maldives SDG Roadmap. This SDG Roadmap proposes a **framework for accelerating progress on the SDGs in Maldives** which is built around the SDGs pillars — People, Planet, Peace (and Good Governance) and Prosperity — complemented by an in-depth analysis of three priorities for Maldives: economic diversification, decentralization and building resilience using a systems thinking approach. This methodology allowed making explicit linkages to the SDGs across policy areas and helped identify points of intervention to promote sustainable change in systems. A set of recommendations based on a synthesis of learnings from the acceleration framework and the thematic systems analysis on how to accelerate the pace of progress on national priorities and the SDGs in Maldives, is provided.

The report further reviews the institutional mechanisms underlying national development planning and coordination and makes recommendations towards enhancing their effectiveness considering the integrated nature of the SDGs and stated national priorities, notably decentralization. This is covered in Section V on **policy and institutional framework for acceleration**.

The COVID-19 pandemic has increased the financing gap for the SDGs in developing countries and Maldives is not an exception. On the contrary, the sudden halt of international tourism caused an unprecedented economic shock, undermining the country’s fiscal and external position, livelihoods and employment. The required response, which involved cash transfers and other support measures to

¹ Annex 1 provides a list of the Maldives MAPS engagement team members.

businesses and the local population to weather the crisis, further increased pressures on public finance and debt. Section VI of the report on **SDG financing** discusses these issues, recognizing Maldives has launched a consultative process for the formulation of an Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF) which will articulate a holistic strategy for financing the SDGs in the country in a post-COVID-19 context.

Section VII on the **data ecosystem** highlights the strengths and weaknesses of Maldives' statistical system and associated progress and limitations on monitoring of the SDGs in the country. Finally, Section VIII outlines a **stakeholder engagement strategy for the SDG Roadmap**, making specific suggestions on outreach and partnerships that can facilitate the implementation of the report's recommendations and nurture a whole of society approach to sustainable development in Maldives.

II. ACCELERATING PROGRESS ON THE SDGS IN MALDIVES

2.1 Maldives development context: the impact of COVID-19

Maldives is a successful development story. Economic growth combined with the expansion of social services, connectivity and infrastructure development has allowed the country to sustain poverty reduction, socio-economic progress and human development over the past 30 years. The human development index increased by 33.3 percent between 1990 and 2019 amid steady progress in standards of living, health and education.²

An upper-middle income country, with a GDP per capita of US \$10,562 in 2019,³ the country has experienced high economic growth averaging 6.4 percent per year between 2010 and 2019. Economic growth has been driven mostly by the tourism sector which represents 26 percent of GDP (2019) and associated activities, fishery exports and construction.

Maldives is one of the world's 38 small islands developing states (SIDS) and is part of the SIDS region labelled under the acronym "AIS" (Atlantic, Indian Ocean and South China Sea). The Declaration of the Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action, the S.A.M.O.A Pathway acknowledges that SIDS remain a special case for sustainable development in view of their shared unique vulnerabilities. Although countries worldwide are faced with accelerating change and challenges, for the 38 SIDS, including Maldives, it tends to be more intense and rapidly felt because of the following SIDS-specific common development challenges: small landmass; small populations; geographical isolation and spatial dispersion; high cost of transport, communication and energy; low-lying areas and extreme vulnerability to climate change and natural hazards; fragility of island ecosystems and high level of endemism; narrow resource-based and undiversified economies; remoteness from markets and strong dependence on trade and travel; high sensitivity to international fluctuations and narrow trade partners and lack of access to concessional financing.

At the start of the Decade of Action for the SDGs, the country finds itself at a critical juncture with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic calling for renewed efforts in adapting its high-end tourism-dependent economic model, leveraging the rapidly closing demographic transition and adapting to climate change and other environmental impacts to be able to deliver sustained and sustainable development to all by 2030 and beyond.

The impact of COVID-19 in Maldives

The sudden closure of borders and travel restrictions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 led to a decline of 67 percent and 43 percent in gross value added (GVA) of tourism and the closely related sector of transport and communication, respectively.⁴ The country registered 555,494 tourist arrivals in 2020, down from 1.7 million the previous year.⁵ The construction sector which represents 6.8 percent of GDP was similarly severely affected by supply trade disruptions and lockdown measures, with impacts on infrastructure and other building projects. The sector registered a decline of 33.8 percent of GVA compared to 2019. Fisheries, on the other hand, grew by 10 percent year-on-year. Fish purchases and exports expanded compared to 2019. The overall impact of the crisis was

² UNDP (2020). Briefing note for countries on the Human Development Report 2020. The Next Frontier: Human Development and the Anthropocene. Maldives, p. 2.

³ data.worldbank.org.

⁴ Maldives Bureau of Statistics (2021). Annual Gross Domestic Production, 14 October 2021.

⁵ Maldives Bureau of Statistics (2020). Employment in Resorts 2020, p. 6.

very severed for the Maldivian economy leading to a real GDP fall of 33.5 percent,⁶ and for livelihoods and employment.

A Rapid Livelihood Assessment of the impact of COVID-19 in Maldives conducted by the Ministry of Economic Development and UNDP released in August 2020 refers to the impact of the crisis on the estimated 45,000 resort employees, including 22,000 local employees. These were all affected quite directly and immediately by the slow down and eventual halt of tourist arrivals to Maldives. Data from the Resort Management Survey indicate that 4 percent of employees lost their job immediately; others were affected by different arrangements involving instances of no pay leave and lower salaries among others.⁷ An analysis of the Jobcenter data based on individuals registered for the Income Support Allowance (ISA) suggests that close to 13 percent of the employed population in the country (employed and self-employed) was affected by COVID-19 through job or income losses.⁸ The Income Support Allowance was established as part of the Government of Maldives Economic Resilience Plan in March 2020 to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on businesses and households. The Income Support Allowance was limited to the local population (i.e., migrant workers were excluded, even though they represent an important percentage of the economically active population in Maldives) and to individuals whose salary fell below MVR5,000. For self-employed, the business needed to be registered to qualify for support. As of January 2021, 22,940 individuals had been paid benefits under the programme. Given the exclusion of migrant workers and workers in the informal economy who faced barriers to registration, lacking supporting documents to submit full requests, the Jobcenter data underestimates the impact on livelihoods and employment. All these factors point nevertheless, to an increase of the unemployment rate in Maldives in 2020 up from 5.3 percent the previous year, though exact figures are unavailable.⁹

Youth (between 18 and 34 years of age) have been disproportionately affected by the crisis, with 52 percent of Income Support Allowance beneficiaries belonging to this age group.¹⁰ Moreover, the unemployment rate for youth was higher than the rate for the population at large (at 15.9 percent before the pandemic).¹¹ The same Jobcenter data set indicates that 12 percent of employed women experienced job or income losses and that women represent 56 percent of the self-employed who received an Income Support Allowance, more than half in low-paid farming or manufacturing activities, such as food production for hotels. To the extent that many of these businesses were unable to gather requisite supporting documents to access benefits, the severity of the COVID-19 impact on women's livelihoods and employment is stronger than these data suggest.¹² Further pressure mounted on women because of an increase in unpaid work and by their overrepresentation among health workers, accounting for 70 percent.¹³

Globally, ILO estimates a 4.5 percent loss in working hours due to covid compared to the level attained in the last quarter of 2019 (equivalent to 131 million full-time jobs).¹⁴ However, this aggregate picture masks great divergences between countries. For Maldives, the ILO estimates 11.4 percent of working hours were lost due to covid in 2020, and this is likely to reduce to 7.0 percent in 2021. This translates to 31,000 and 19,500 full-time jobs based on 48 hours per week, respectively.¹⁵

⁶ Maldives Bureau of Statistics (2021). Gross Domestic Product 2021. GDP figures at constant prices.

⁷ Ministry of Economic Development and UNDP (2020). Rapid Livelihood Assessment. Impact of the COVID-19 crisis in the Maldives, p. 48.

⁸ Ministry of Economic Development (2021). The Impact of COVID-19 on employment in Maldives, p. 11.

⁹ Maldives Bureau of Statistics (2019). Household and Income Expenditure Survey 2019. Employment.

¹⁰ Ministry of Economic Development (2021). The Impact of COVID-19 on employment in Maldives, p. 21.

¹¹ Data refers to rate of unemployment for youth between 15 and 24 years of age; World Bank (2020). Maldives Systematic Country Diagnostic Update, Report number: 157675-MV, p. 12.

¹² Ministry of Economic Development (2021). The Impact of COVID-19 on employment in Maldives, p. 28.

¹³ United Nations Maldives (2020). COVID-19 Socio-Economic Response and Recovery Framework, p. 18.

¹⁴ ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the world of work. Eighth edition.

¹⁵ ILOSTATS.

The World Bank estimates income poverty in Maldives increased by 5.1 percentage points in 2020 from the previous year, though this estimate does not consider the effects of the government's resilience measures.¹⁶ However, the multidimensional poverty index (MPI) for Maldives indicates that 28 percent of the population is poor and suffers deprivations across different dimensions of well-being. The analysis also uncovers significant disparities between the capital city and atolls, as well as between age groups and gender,¹⁷ with COVID-19 potentially exacerbating pre-existing inequalities. Children tend to suffer disproportionately during crises and adverse impacts on their nutrition and schooling can persist for years. When COVID-19 hit and the education system turned to home schooling and distance learning, access and participation was unequal. An assessment by the Ministry of Education shows that 31 percent of the potential audience for school distance learning (meaning, teachers, students and parents) did not have internet connectivity at home and faced difficulty accessing data through mobile phones in the absence of internet connectivity at home, due to prohibitive costs. Equally, concerns arose over low-achieving students and students with special needs being further disadvantaged by the difficulty of pivoting to distance learning and/or receiving adequate support, despite adaptive measures undertaken by the Ministry of Education and teachers.¹⁸

The fall of tourism and overall economic activity resulting from COVID-19 had an impact on public finances, with total government revenue falling by 37.7 percent in 2020 as compared to the previous year.¹⁹ Though adjusted non-essential expenditures and capital expenditures on infrastructure projects were lower than planned, the government incurred additional expenses to respond to the health and socio-economic impacts of the crisis. On health, for example, expenditures increased to finance an allowance to acknowledge frontline workers' contribution to the fight against the pandemic and in adapting and equipping healthcare facilities. On the socio-economic front, in addition to the Income Support Allowance mentioned above, three other programmes were rolled out: the COVID-19 recovery loan scheme and subsidies to electricity and water bills. As of 28 October 2021, MVR 1,773 million had been spent on these programmes. Other measures included price controls on staples and deferment of resort lease rent payments, for example. The combination of these factors led to a budget deficit of 22.8 percent in 2020.²⁰

With the opening of borders and travel, tourism arrivals start recovering towards the end of 2020 and through 2021, reaching 1.2 million tourists by 20 December of 2021. A strong vaccination effort made opening tourism to the country possible, while avoiding an escalation of COVID-19 cases. As of 16 December 2021, 73 percent of the population had received at least one dose of vaccine.²¹

With the pick-up of tourism and overall economic activity, there is optimism concerning Maldives' recovery outlook. Nevertheless, risks abound, including the unpredictable nature of the pandemic, with the risk of new variants undermining global economic recovery and business and household confidence, including among tourists. The fragile recovery harbours risks for Maldives in relation to macro-economic imbalances, such as trade and the government deficit (16 percent of GDP in 2021) and debt which is expected to amount to 125.2 percent of GDP in 2021 (both public and public guaranteed debt).²² Going forward, and to bounce back quickly, it is critical that Maldives is able to

¹⁶ World Bank (2021). Maldives Development Update. A Digital Dawn, p. 14. Poverty data refer to the proportion of the population below the international poverty line for upper-middle income counties of \$5.50 per person per day at PPP.

¹⁷ National Bureau of Statistics (2020). National Multidimensional Poverty in Maldives. National Bureau of Statistics, Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative and UNICEF Maldives.

¹⁸ UNESCO (2021). Maldives Case Study. Situation Analysis of the effects of and response to COVID-19 on the Education Sector in Asia, UNESCO and UNICEF, October 2021, p. 24.

¹⁹ MIRA (2021). Maldives Inland Revenue Authority 2020 Annual Report, p. 29.

²⁰ Ministry of Finance (2021). Medium-Term Fiscal Strategy 2022-2024, p. 18.

²¹ <https://ourworldindata.org/coronavirus/country/maldives>.

²² Ministry of Finance (2021). Medium Term Fiscal Strategy 2022-2024, 31 July 2021, p. 40.

stimulate a strong recovery from COVID-19, helping those who lost their livelihoods and whose vulnerability increased, while addressing structural vulnerabilities associated with its condition of being a small island developing state and trends of concern predating the pandemic, such as increasing inequality.

SDG achievements in Maldives: What the data say

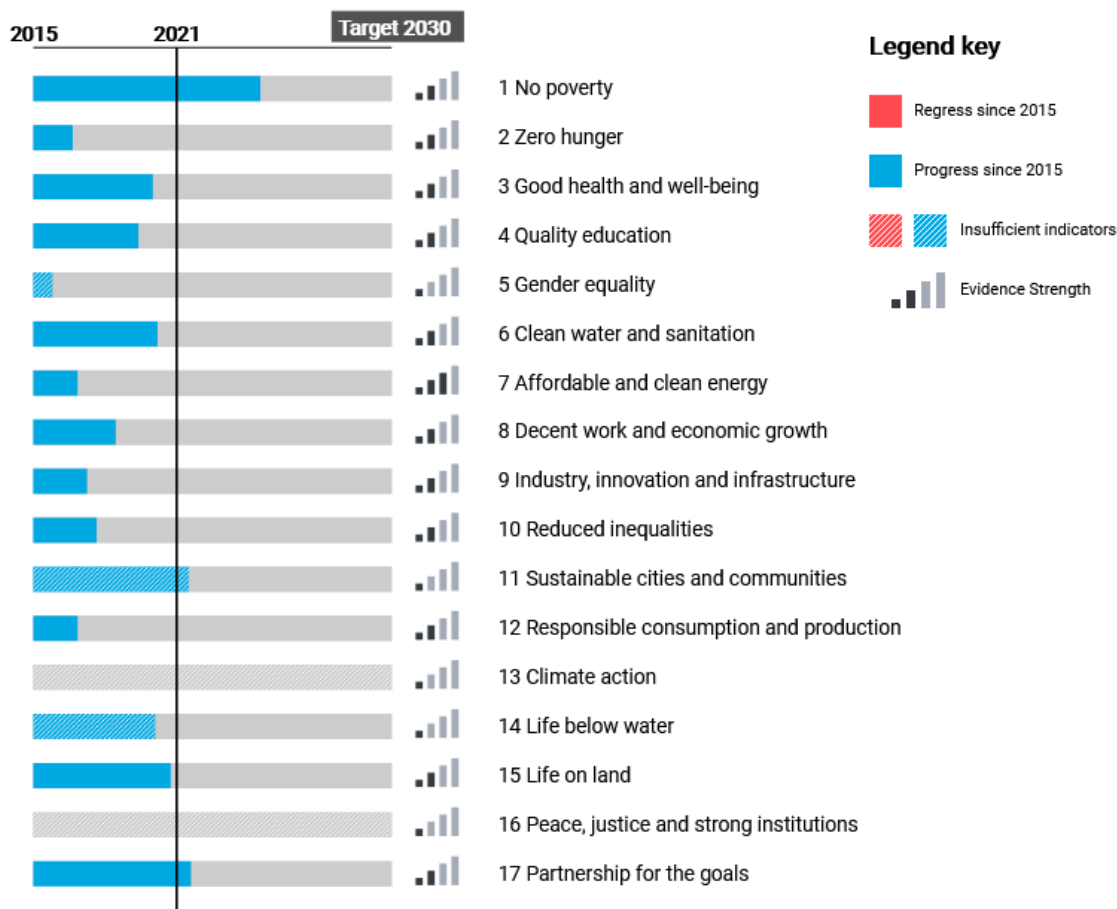
This section provides an assessment of the progress that Maldives has been making towards the SDGs until 2021 and predicts, on current trends, whether the country is likely to achieve the targets by 2030. The methodology for the assessment has been developed by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).²³ The assessment utilizes data for Maldives drawn from the global SDG indicators database.²⁴ When sufficient data on a particular indicator are not available, the assessment uses additional indicators from internationally recognized sources. For indicators without explicit target values, the assessment methodology employs regional-level target values that are based on the achievement of the five best performing countries in Asia and the Pacific.

The SDG progress snapshot (Figure 1) shows where Maldives stood in 2021 on each of the 17 SDGs. The length of each bar indicates the distance travelled between 2015 and 2021 on the way to the goal. If a bar reaches or crosses the 2021 vertical line, the country is on track to reach the goal not later than 2030. Whether or not a goal will be achieved by 2030 does not only depend on the distance travelled so far, but also on the pace of progress going forward. This is reflected in the SDG progress dashboard (Figure 2) at the target level.

²³ See also the resources at the *Asia-Pacific SDG Gateway* at <https://data.unescap.org/home>. For details on the methodology, see <https://data.unescap.org/resource-guides/progress-assessment-methodology>.

²⁴ See <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/unsdg>.

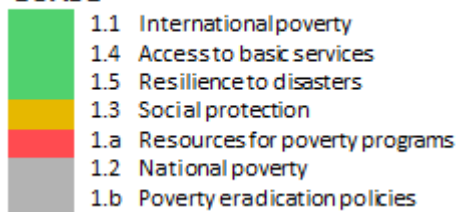
Figure 1: Snapshot of SDG progress in Maldives



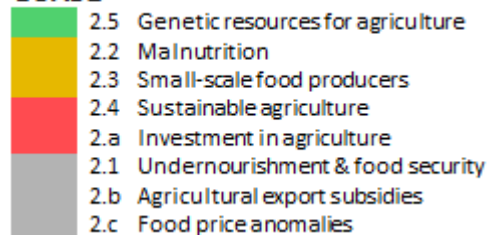
Maldives has been making the progress necessary so far to reach by 2030 the goals on no poverty (Goal 1), sustainable cities and communities (Goal 11, albeit on weak evidence) and partnership for the goals (Goal 17). Good progress, but in need of acceleration, has been achieved on the goals on good health and well-being (Goal 3), quality education (Goal 4), clean water and sanitation (Goal 6), decent work and economic growth (Goal 8), life below water (Goal 14, on weak evidence) and life on land (Goal 15). Stronger effort is needed to accelerate progress on the goals on zero hunger (Goal 2), gender equality (Goal 5), affordable and clean energy (Goal 7), industry, innovation and infrastructure (Goal 9), reduced inequality (Goal 10, weak evidence) and responsible consumption and production (Goal 12). Data is lacking to draw any conclusion for the goals on climate action (Goal 13) and peace, justice and strong institutions (Goal 16).

Figure 2: Dashboard of SDG progress in Maldives

GOAL 1



GOAL 2



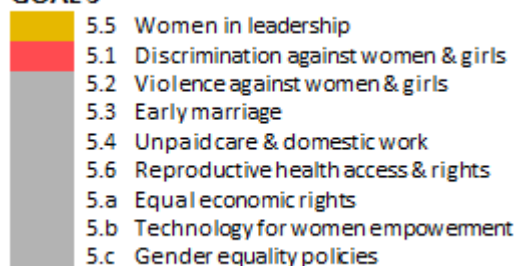
GOAL 3



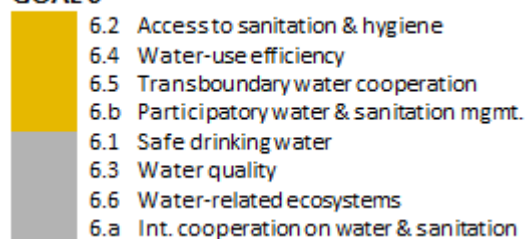
GOAL 4



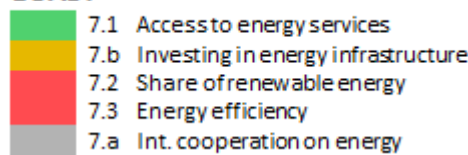
GOAL 5



GOAL 6



GOAL 7



GOAL 8



■ MAINTAIN progress to achieve target
■ ACCELERATE progress to achieve target

■ REVERSE trend to achieve target
■ CANNOT be measured

GOAL 9

- 9.c Access to ICT & internet
- 9.b Domestic technology development
- 9.1 Infrastructure development
- 9.2 Sustainable/inclusive industrialisation
- 9.3 Small-scaled industry access to finance
- 9.4 Sustainable & clean industries
- 9.5 Research and development
- 9.a Resilient infrastructure

GOAL 10

- 10.2 Inclusion (socio-economic, political)
- 10.4 Fiscal & social protection policies
- 10.7 Safe migration & mobility
- 10.1 Income growth (bottom 40%)
- 10.3 Eliminate discrimination
- 10.5 Regulation of financial markets
- 10.6 Inclusive global governance
- 10.a Special & differential treatment (WTO)
- 10.b Resource flows for development
- 10.c Remittance costs

GOAL 11

- 11.2 Public transport systems
- 11.6 Urban air quality & waste mgmt.
- 11.1 Housing & basic services
- 11.5 Resilience to disasters
- 11.3 Sustainable urbanisation
- 11.4 Cultural & natural heritage
- 11.7 Urban green & public spaces
- 11.a Urban planning
- 11.b Disaster risk management policies
- 11.c Sustainable & resilient buildings

GOAL 12

- 12.4 Managing chemicals & wastes
- 12.a Support for R&D capacity for SD
- 12.b Sustainable tourism monitoring
- 12.2 Sustainable use of natural resources
- 12.1 Programmes on SCP
- 12.3 Food waste and losses
- 12.5 Reduction in waste generation
- 12.6 Corporate sustainable practices
- 12.7 Public procurement practices
- 12.8 Sustainable development awareness
- 12.c Fossil-fuel subsidies

GOAL 13

- 13.1 Resilience & adaptive capacity
- 13.2 Climate change policies
- 13.3 Climate change awareness
- 13.a UNFCCC commitments
- 13.b Climate change planning & mgnt.

GOAL 14



- 14.5 Conservation of coastal areas
- 14.7 Marine resources for SIDS & LDCs
- 14.1 Marine pollution
- 14.2 Marine & coastal ecosystems
- 14.3 Ocean acidification
- 14.4 Sustainable fishing
- 14.6 Fisheries subsidies
- 14.a Research capacity & marine tech.
- 14.b Small-scale artisanal fishing
- 14.c Implementing UNCLOS



GOAL 15

- 15.8 Invasive alien species
- 15.1 Terrestrial & freshwater ecosys.
- 15.2 Sustainable forest management
- 15.5 Loss of biodiversity
- 15.3 Desertification and land degradation
- 15.4 Conservation of mountain ecosys.
- 15.6 Utilisation of genetic resource
- 15.7 Protected species trafficking
- 15.9 Biodiversity in national & local planning
- 15.a Resources for biodiversity & ecosys.
- 15.b Resources for forest management
- 15.c Protected species trafficking (global)

GOAL 16

- 16.1 Reduction violence & related deaths
- 16.2 Human trafficking
- 16.3 Justice for all
- 16.4 Illicit financial & arms flows
- 16.5 Corruption and bribery
- 16.6 Effective institutions
- 16.7 Inclusive decision-making
- 16.8 Inclusive global governance
- 16.9 Legal identity
- 16.10 Public access to information
- 16.a Capacity to prevent violence
- 16.b Non-discriminatory laws

-  MAINTAIN progress to achieve target
-  ACCELERATE progress to achieve target

-  REVERSE trend to achieve target
-  CANNOT be measured

GOAL 17



- MAINTAIN progress to achieve target
- ACCELERATE progress to achieve target
- REVERSE trend to achieve target
- CANNOT be measured

An SDG goal-by-goal analysis of progress at the target level reveals the below picture.²⁵

Goal 1: Maldives is on its way to eradicate poverty. Good progress has been made on international poverty (target 1.1), access to basic services (target 1.4) and resilience to disasters (target 1.5). However, progress on social protection needs to be accelerated, while resources for poverty have declined (target 1.a). Data are lacking to measure progress towards the targets on national poverty (target 1.2) and poverty eradication policies (target 1.b).

Goal 2: Additional effort is needed to eliminate hunger. Maldives is only on track for the target on genetic resources for agriculture (target 2.5). More effort is needed on malnutrition (target 2.2) and small-scale food producers (target 2.3), while trends on sustainable agriculture (target 2.4) and investment in agriculture (target 2.a) need to be reversed. Three of the eight targets under this goal lack data to assess progress.

Goal 3: Despite good progress in reducing mortality, additional effort is needed to ensure good health and well-being across all dimensions. Maldives has performed well on maternal mortality (target 2.1) and child mortality (target 2.2). However, progress has not been fast enough to reach eight of the 13 targets under Goal 3. Trends have been worsening on communicable diseases (target 3.3) and substance abuse (target 3.5). Data on tobacco control (target 3.a) are lacking to assess progress.

Goal 4: More effort is needed to achieve all aspects of quality education. Maldives has achieved good progress on early childhood development (target 4.2). However, progress on effective learning outcomes (target 4.1), adult literacy and numeracy (target 4.6), education facilities (target 4.a) and qualified teachers (target 4.c) requires acceleration, while the deteriorating trend on equal access to education (target 4.5) needs to be reversed. Four of the ten targets under this goal lack data to measure progress.

²⁵ The COVID-19 pandemic casts a considerable amount of uncertainty around the results presented here.

Goal 5: A paucity of data limits the assessment of progress towards gender equality. Data are lacking to measure progress on seven of the nine targets under this goal. Progress on women in leadership (target 5.5) requires acceleration, while negative trends related to discrimination against women and girls (target 5.1) needs to be reversed.

Goal 6: A final push is required on clean water and sanitation. Maldives needs to advance faster on each of the four targets for which progress can be measured under this goal, namely access to sanitation and hygiene (target 6.2), water-use efficiency (target 6.4), transboundary water cooperation (target 6.5) and participatory water and sanitation management (target 6.b).

Goal 7: Extra effort is needed to ensure access to affordable and clean energy. Good progress has been achieved on access to energy services (target 7.1). Investment in energy infrastructure (target 7.b), on the other hand, needs to be accelerated, while the negative trends on the share of renewable energy (target 7.2) and energy efficiency (target 7.3) needs to be reversed. Data are lacking to measure progress on international cooperation on energy (target 7.a).

Goal 8: The picture for decent work and economic growth is mixed. The progress on per capita economic growth (target 8.1) and youth not in employment, education or training (target 8.6) has been good. However, progress on economic productivity and innovation (target 8.2), formalization of small- and medium-sized enterprises (target 8.3), labour rights and safe working environments (target 8.8) and access to financial services (target 8.1) requires acceleration, while the trends on material resource efficiency (target 8.4) and full employment and decent work (target 8.5) require turnaround. Four of the twelve targets under this goal lack data to assess progress.

Goal 9: Further effort is needed on industry, innovation and infrastructure. Maldives has been progressing well on access to ICT and the Internet (target 9.c). However, the progress so far has been insufficient on domestic technology development (target 9.b), while the country has been moving away from the targets on infrastructure development (target 9.1) and sustainable/inclusive industrialization (target 9.2). Four of the eight targets under this goal lack data to measure progress.

Goal 10: Much work remains to be done on reducing inequalities. Progress needs to be accelerated for the three targets for which data is available, namely social, economic and political inclusion (target 10.2), fiscal and social protection policies (target 10.4) and safe migration and mobility (target 10.7). Seven of the ten targets under this goal lack data to measure progress.

Goal 11: The picture on sustainable cities and communities is positive, albeit based on limited evidence. Maldives has achieved good progress on public transport systems (target 11.2) and urban air quality and waste management (target 11.6). However, the progress on housing and basic services (target 11.1) and resilience to disasters (target 11.5) requires quickening. Six of the 10 targets under this goal lack data to assess progress.

Goal 12: Greater effort is needed to achieve responsible consumption and production. Progress on managing chemicals and waste (target 12.4), support for R&D capacity for sustainable development (target 12.a) and sustainable tourism monitoring (target 12.b) needs to be sped up, while the declining trend of sustainable use of natural resources (target 12.2) requires reversal. Seven of the 11 targets under this goal lack data to measure progress.

Goal 13: Evidence on climate action is largely lacking. Good progress has been achieved on resilience and adaptive capacity (target 13.1), but the trend on climate change policies (target 13.2) has been negative. Data are lacking on the remaining three targets under this goal to assess progress.

Goal 14: Limited evidence indicates good progress on life below water. The performance on conservation of coastal area (target 14.5) and marine resources (target 14.7) has been good, but Maldives has been moving away from the target on marine pollution (target 14.1). The remaining seven targets under this goal lack data to measure progress.

Goal 15: Work remains to be done on life on land in all its dimensions. The progress on invasive alien species (target 15.8) has been good. However, progress on terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems (target 15.1) and sustainable forests management (target 15.2) needs to increase, while the trend on loss of biodiversity (target 15.5) needs to be reversed. Eight of the 12 targets under this goal lack data to assess progress.

Goal 16: The evidence is lacking to assess progress on peace, justice and strong institutions. Data is lacking to measure progress on any of the 12 targets under this goal.

Goal 17: Maldives is making good progress on partnership for the goals. The performance on capacity building for ICT (target 17.8), capacity building for SDGs (target 17.9), public, private and civil society organization partnerships (target 17.17) and statistical capacity (target 17.19) has been good. On the other hand, the progress on tax and other revenue collection (target 17.1), science and technical international cooperation (target 17.6), multilateral trading systems (target 17.10) and national statistics availability (target 17.19) requires acceleration. The trend on debt sustainability (target 17.4) needs to be reversed. Data on 10 of the targets under this goal are lacking to assess progress, although not all of these are relevant to Maldives.

The above breakdown indicates that the data availability for Maldives in the global SDG indicators database is limited. Progress can be measured for only 79 of the 169 global targets. This is not untypical for a relatively small country with a relatively small national statistical system. At the indicator level, data availability was sufficient – i.e., the underlying data series contained at least the two data points necessary to estimate historical trends – for 113 of the 231 global indicators in 2021.²⁶ For another 28 indicators, data availability was insufficient, i.e., the data series contained just one data point.²⁷ The data series for the remaining 90 indicators contained no data points. However, it is important to note that the data coverage of Maldives in the global SDG indicators database has been rapidly improving. In 2019, the number of data series with sufficient, insufficient and no data were 86, 22 and 124 respectively.²⁸

ESCAP is currently working with Maldives to implement the National SDG Tracker.²⁹ The National SDG Tracker is a tool that allows countries to add their national SDG data and enter their national target values and then visualize progress in a similar vein as done above in this section. The major challenge to this work in Maldives is the absence so far of national SDG target values across all indicators.

²⁶ See <https://data.unescap.org/data-analysis/sdg-data-availability>.

²⁷ Although no historical trends can be estimated with one data point, such points are still useful in reflecting the current status of a country.

²⁸ In 2019, the total number of indicators on the global list was still 232.

²⁹ See <https://data.unescap.org/stories/national-sdg-tracker>.

Therefore, though the Strategic Action Plan does integrate the SDGs and targets relatively well, some SDG targets still need to be adapted to the national context.

2.2 Acceleration framework for the SDGs

The concept of sustainable development embedded in the SDGs is anchored in the idea that economic prosperity, environmental sustainability and social equity and well-being are interdependent. Policy formulation and action towards implementation of the SDGs should acknowledge the interlinkages across these three dimensions of sustainable development, both in terms of potential synergies and trade-offs. An integrated approach is therefore necessary.

While the SDGs are universal in nature, providing a plan of action to all countries regardless of development status and other conditions, the SDGs are not a uniform template to be applied across the world. On the contrary, the SDGs are meant to be localized at country level, translating global goals and targets into differentiated meaningful objectives at national level, helping to advance local aspirations while contributing to the global efforts.

Methodological approach for acceleration

This SDG Roadmap makes suggestions for accelerating progress on the SDGs in Maldives, anchored in the specific country context and national priorities. To achieve this, the methodological approach was articulated at three levels: 1) an acceleration framework across SDG pillars; 2) systems thinking to understand and affect change across three key national priorities; and 3) a stakeholder survey to expand the reach of the MAPS engagement. These three levels are outlined below and discussed more in-depth in the following sub-sections.

Acceleration framework across SDG pillars

A multidimensional approach was used that recognized that the realization of the SDGs required moving away from a gap analysis by sector towards a more complex and holistic understanding of development challenges. Solutions consist of a package of interventions, or COMBOS, spanning different policy areas as opposed to isolated sectoral measures.

The methodology consisted of undertaking a contextual analysis for understanding the national priorities under the SDG pillars. This was achieved through a review of key national policies and plans, especially the Strategic Action Plan (2019-2023) and the National Resilience and Recovery Plan 2020-2022, of which the former was repurposed to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Other diagnostics and assessment documents from international organizations and international finance institutions, as well as sectoral policies, were reviewed and exchanged with government officials and United Nations staff. The results of this analysis were captured in a problem statement that synthesizes the main development challenges faced by Maldives under each SDG pillar and the drivers behind the challenges. The next step was articulating a vision to 2030 for each SDG pillar in Maldives and identifying focus areas to enable progress towards that vision.

The Strategic Action Plan (2019-2023) is Maldives' central policy framework and planning document that defines priorities over a five-year period integrating the government's manifesto pledges and sectoral priorities. As the Strategic Action Plan itself acknowledges, weaknesses in long-term planning and visioning exist in the country.³⁰ Maldives has not articulated long-term development objectives spanning the timeframe of the SDGs to 2030. In this context, the vision statements formulated by the MAPS team are inferred from the policy documents of the country, complemented with information gathered through consultations with national stakeholders and responses to the stakeholder survey, which included a specific question about a vision for the future on key national priorities.

³⁰ Government of Maldives (2019). Strategic Action Plan 2019-2023, p. 12.

The multidimensional approach consists of several steps undertaken in part or in full depending on the purpose of engagement, timelines and resource availability (See Box 1 below). The MAPS team defined the acceleration framework as per Step 1 and Step 2, identifying a problem statement and enablers for progress towards a vision of sustainable development, complemented with other levels of analysis as further explained below.

Box 1: COMBOS – A multidimensional approach for SDG acceleration

The COMBOS approach is a collaborative engagement process for recognizing synergies and interconnections between the SDGs based on the priorities of each country. The approach helps to frame a challenge (development problem) and identify a set of interventions that can address the problem in a holistic manner.

The approach seeks to move from a sector or goal-specific gap analysis and response towards a holistic understanding of development, as embedded in the SDGs. It helps identify actions that can drive progress across a broad range of interlinked goals promoting reflections on the connections and synergies, both positive and negative, across policies.



The approach consists of five steps. The first step is defining a complex development problem based on national priorities, using a multidimensional approach as opposed to a sectoral gap approach. Step 2 is to formulate a theory of change around the problem using quantitative analysis, interactive dialogue, review of national policies and strategies, or a combination of tools, to define focus areas. Step 3 involves the identification of existing policies and gaps, bottlenecks and solutions, prioritization of interventions, defining means of implementation, setting targets and timing – all translated into an SDG Roadmap. Step 4, the implementation phase, requires a definition of responsibilities, reach of interventions, coordination mechanisms and quality assurance. Step 5 involves monitoring and evaluation, inclusive of required capacity development and formulation of an M&E system.

For additional information on the methodology see: <https://sdgintegration.undp.org/combos-approach>.

Systems thinking to understand and affect change across three key national priorities

The MAPS engagement approach involved an analysis of three national priorities: 1) economic diversification; 2) decentralization; and 3) building resilience. The analysis used a systems thinking approach which focuses on understanding the way that constituent parts (nodes) are interrelated and work together as a whole, over time. Systems are bound together by relationships of cause and effect. Systems behaviour results from reinforcing and balancing processes which keep the system in equilibrium. In this context, an essential element of systems thinking is understanding the way elements in the system feed backward and forward between one another. Two main types of feedback are: 1) reinforcing feedback, which enhances the initial change (either positive or negative); and 2) balancing feedback, which moves in the opposite direction to restore the lost balance in the system.

From a policy perspective, one of the purposes of applying systems thinking is to identify the best place in the system to intervene to change its behaviour in a way that moves it closer towards the goal or objective being sought after. Referred to as ‘leverage points,’ these strategic places can, however, be counterintuitive due to several reasons, including delays in policy changes having a visible effect on the system.

The MAPS team, in cooperation with Systainability Asia, developed systems for each of the national priorities based on national policy documents, in particular the Strategic Action Plan and the National Recovery and Resilience Plan, as well as other sectoral strategies, diagnoses and analyses by the Government of Maldives, international organizations and international financial institutions. The systems developed were reviewed with national stakeholders from government, civil society and the private sector in thematic workshops and follow-up discussions were held with key stakeholders. The systems were then revised based on the results of the consultations.

The system analysis identified leverage points and various subsystems related to key feedback loops across components in the system, based on the work of Donella Meadows (See Box 2).

Box 2: Leverage points — levers for system change

By Robert Steele, Systainability Asia

Donella H. Meadows, a systems scientist, defines leverage points as places in a system where relatively minor interventions can lead to relatively major changes in certain outcomes. Leverage points are like acupuncture points in that fine-tuned, strategic interventions can lead to lasting ripple effects in the system. Identifying the right leverage point is not obvious, however. Meadows, called attention to the fact that leverage points are not intuitive or, when they are, we may misunderstand the way the system works, intervening in a way that can worsen the problem at hand.

Meadows codified a list of 12 generic places to intervene in the system, or leverage points, according to their effectiveness in driving sustainable change across the whole system. The list shows a certain hierarchy among possible leverage points. It assumes that transformative change is unlikely if only shallow low-impact leverage points are acted upon (such as changing parameters or increasing stocks). However, Meadows also recognizes that acting on deeper leverage points (e.g., altering worldviews and paradigms) is often difficult in practice, even if the benefits might be substantial.

When utilizing a leverage point approach for strategic change, it is important to recognize the interactions across different types of leverage points and how interventions at mid to shallow leverage points (i.e., relatively lower impact leverage points that are easier to act upon) can create the necessary conditions for more difficult but higher impact leverage points to gain traction. For example: Changing rules related to the rights of women (a relatively deep leverage point) can and has in various countries led to changes in parameters, such as the percentage of women targeted to hold public office (a relatively shallow leverage point), which if implemented effectively, can eventually create a change in the way society views women, including men adjusting their attitudes about women (a deep leverage point). Interactions between leverage points suggest that there are ‘chains of leverage’ that interact to lead to the transformative change sought in the end. A working hypothesis is that if such chains do extend to deep leverage points, then it has the potential to bring about transformative change. In contrast, a chain that only involves shallow leverage points is unlikely to affect transformation.

Reference: Meadows, Donella H. (1999). “Leverage Points: Places to Intervene in a System.” The Sustainability Institute.

Stakeholder survey: Expanding the reach of the MAPS engagement

As part of the MAPS engagement process, a stakeholder survey was undertaken, led by the Government of Maldives through the MNPHI, which gathered perspectives and insights from various stakeholders concerning challenges, opportunities and specific policies and actions around each of the three national priorities (as noted above).

To ensure that the SDG Roadmap was informed by an inclusive process, the survey consulted a wide array of stakeholders, including those in the public sector, civil society, private sector, academia, etc.

The survey questionnaire was designed by the United Nations MAPS Team in close consultation with the Government of Maldives and included both multiple choice and open-ended questions. Annex 2 provides a technical note with further details of the survey and its structure and Annex 3 is a copy of the survey itself.

Acceleration framework across SDG pillars

This section articulates an acceleration framework for sustainable development in the Maldives along the SDG pillars of People, Planet, Peace and Prosperity. It provides a synthesis of the MAPS engagement's collective diagnosis of what are the main development challenges and their drivers under each pillar. The section articulates a vision of a desirable future and the areas in which policy efforts and investments are necessary to translate the vision into tangible changes to realize a better future.

People

Maldives has almost completed its demographic transition with the bulk of the population being of working age. According to the Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2019, the active adult population (15-64 years) represents 67 percent of the total population. Due to a rapid fertility decline and increased longevity of the population, Maldives' window of opportunity to realize the demographic dividend was at its height over a decade ago. According to United Nation's population projections, Maldives will become an aging population by the year 2030 and a completely aged society by the year 2050.³¹ The potential support ratio, which is the ratio of population aged 25-64 to the population aged 65 and over, will decline from 17 working-aged persons to one older person in 2020 to a 3 to 1 ratio in 2050. Hence, Maldives will enter an aged society faster than other countries in the region.³²

This important shift in the demographic structure of Maldives compounds the already high costs of social spending associated with geographical fragmentation and dispersed populations and will increase the long-term sustainability pressure on the development model prevalent in the country. The current model channels tourism rents to finance social expenditures, including health, education and social protection, and the costs of these latter expenditures have been increasing. On the other hand, the model as it stands today has failed to address the needs of vulnerable groups which experience inequality, discrimination and limited participation exacerbated by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. To preserve socio-economic achievements and ensure everyone partakes in the benefits of development, a need exists to work simultaneously towards the sustainability of social spending and embracing universality and higher effectiveness.

³¹ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2019). World Population Prospects 2019: Highlights. ST/ESA/SER.A/423.

³² United Nations (2019). World Population Prospects (2019). United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. As 25 percent of the population are migrant workers, a fluctuation in number of in- and out-migrants will impact the population structure in Maldives.

Income poverty in Maldives is relatively low but almost a third of the population is poor across several dimensions, enduring deprivations. 8.2 percent of the population is poor according to the national poverty line of MVR74 per day.³³ However, the proportion of the population multidimensionally poor is much higher at 28.4 percent. These dimensions refer to health and education, access to the internet, safe drinking water, overcrowding and sanitation, among others.³⁴

Inequality is a growing concern for Maldives and a barrier to sustainable development. According to the Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2019, income is concentrated at the top, with 20 percent of the population holding 45 percent of total income, whereas the poorest 20 percent controls only five percent of total income. Important geographical disparities also exist: income poverty is below 2 percent in the capital city of Malé, but 13 percent in the atolls.³⁵ Similarly, 87 percent of the multidimensional poor population lives in the atolls whereas 13 percent lives in Malé.³⁶ The concentration of most economic opportunities and services around Malé has significant implications for poverty and inequality in the country.

Maldives has made great achievements in education through sustained investments on expanding access, including through infrastructure development in the atolls. Nevertheless, persistent spatial and other disparities prevent all from benefiting from quality education. Maldives achieved universal primary education a decade ago and has been able to maintain it since, including by ensuring parity for girls and boys.³⁷ Enrollment and completion rates are satisfactory through the lower secondary education,³⁸ but they decline in the higher secondary level due to limited availability: only 59 out of 212 schools in the country offer education at the higher secondary level. As a result, only a limited proportion of children (45 percent) in lower secondary school transition to higher levels of attainment.³⁹ Completion rates also fall from 97 percent and 93 percent in the primary and secondary levels, respectively, to 32 percent in higher secondary level according to the Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2019 data. This break in the learning process complicates the integration of youth in the labour market. Moreover, an analysis of the national transfer account over time indicates that private spending in education has significantly increased from 2016 to 2019. Since enrollment in private schools declined slightly over the same period, this may be the result of either an increase in the average household's spending on education or higher spending by higher income households in education. If the latter, such a trend can widen inequality.⁴⁰

The quality of education represents a major challenge for Maldives, with clear geographical and gender differences. Maldives has defined minimum standards for learning in English, Dhivehi and Mathematics and a more comprehensive policy on assessment is in the process of being adopted. Results of the National Assessment for Learning Outcomes (NALO) indicate that the proportion of students mastering competencies in these three subjects is low and that distinctions in performance exist between geographical regions and across genders. Close to 38 percent of students in Grade 4 and 43 percent of students in Grade 7 failed the minimum requirement to pass the assessment (40 percent) in 2016. Girls outperform boys in the three subjects and geographical disparities are evident,

³³ World Bank (2020). Maldives Systematic Country Diagnostic Update, Report number: 157675-MV, p. 6.

³⁴ Maldives Bureau of Statistics (2020). National Multidimensional Poverty in Maldives 2020, National Statistics Bureau, Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative and UNICEF Maldives Country Office, p. 35.

³⁵ World Bank (2020). Maldives Systematic Country Diagnostic Update, Report number: 157675-MV, p. 35.

³⁶ Maldives Bureau of Statistics (2020). National Multidimensional Poverty in Maldives 2020, National Statistics Bureau, Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative and UNICEF Maldives Country Office.

³⁷ UN Maldives (2020). Common Country Analysis, December 2020.

³⁸ Enrolment of girls in pre-primary school is similarly lower than boys.

³⁹ www.unicef.org/maldives/what-we-do/education.

⁴⁰ UNFPA (2021). Demographic Transition and Maldives' Economy: Trends, Challenges and Future Prospects, 19 June 2021 draft, p. 17.

with Malé among the areas with the best results.⁴¹ Inadequacies in educational outcomes have broad implications for individuals, such as employment opportunities, and for societal objectives, such as economic diversification. During the consultations with stakeholders, there was general acknowledgement of a skills mismatch between graduates and the needs of employers, who lament that new hires lack the skills to be effective on the job.

Many different factors may explain the low quality of education. Despite significant investments in the education sector, gaps remain in terms of education facilities and equipment, including adequate WASH facilities, which disproportionately affect girls.⁴² Other factors have to do with teacher training and education. While government action and initiatives have resulted in improvements in this area, 500 untrained teachers remain in the system.⁴³ Women are more likely than men to train for education (and health), aligned with traditional views of what is an appropriate professional path for women. But women also tend to drop from the labour market upon having children, again largely due to social views of women's role in society, but also due to a lack of support services to reconcile professional and household and other care responsibilities. Accordingly, developing the capabilities and skills of the education workforce cannot be seen in isolation and will not yield the intended benefits without measures to empower women. Maldives engages a sizable number of foreign professionals (22 percent of teachers) to meet the needs of its education system.⁴⁴

The implementation of the Inclusive Education Policy has been instrumental in facilitating a better integration of children with disabilities and special education needs in the education system. The Inclusive Education Policy involved a shift from the implementation of programmes for special education needs in selected schools towards a more mainstreamed approach involving every school and child. The education assessment points to the need to continue focusing on teaching and methodologies that cater to these children and to provide the necessary resources and capacity development.⁴⁵ The United Nations notes the need to improve the policy's implementation by increased awareness of what special needs involve and better alignment between the learning outcomes at university and the curriculum teachers are to deliver at schools. Moreover, data show a widening gap in the enrollment of girls with special education needs over time, underscoring the compounding factors that exacerbate the vulnerabilities of the girl child.⁴⁶

A major concern for social inclusion are limited livelihood and decent employment opportunities for youth. Although unemployment stood at 5.2 percent according to the Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2019, the youth unemployment rate is 10.5 percentage points higher than the national average. Youth between 15 and 24 years of age represent 48 percent of the unemployed, even though they only account for 14 percent of the total population. An even higher number of youth are discouraged workers and are not in employment, education or training (NEET), with 25 percent of male youth (15-24 years old) and 30 percent of females in this category in 2019. While males cite limited opportunities, women mention household and caring responsibilities as a reason for being out of employment and education. However, Maldives defines youth as 18-35 and the proportion of NEET among those aged 18-35 is 29 percent. The NEET rate is highest among young women living in Atoll, at 50 percent. This again underlines that gender is a key cross-cutting issue, informing policies on services, infrastructure and social protection. Equally, policies that promote shared responsibility

⁴¹ Ministry of Education (2019). Maldives Education Sector Analysis, Government of Maldives and the Global Partnership for Education, February 2019, p. 123.

⁴² United Nations Maldives (2020). Common Country Analysis, December 2020, p. 29.

⁴³ United Nations Maldives (2020). Common Country Analysis, December 2020, p. 29.

⁴⁴ UNICEF (2021). Maldives Case Study. Situation Analysis of the effects of and Responses to COVID-19 on the Education Sector in Asia, UNICEF and UNESCO, October 2021, p. 25.

⁴⁵ Ministry of Education (2019). Maldives Education Sector Analysis, Government of Maldives and the Global Partnership for Education, February 2019, p. 154-155.

⁴⁶ United Nations Maldives (2020). Common Country Analysis, December 2020, p. 27.

within the household are needed. These young people run the risk of social exclusion, affecting their entire working life. The first policy response to NEET is encouraging and supporting youth to remain in education and supporting women in education and employment, including through support services.⁴⁷

Other weaknesses in the labour market undermine decent employment. 39.4 percent of those employed in Maldives have informal jobs and the informality is more prevalent (51 percent) among those living in outer atolls. Those in informal employment are vulnerable, having no social security. Moreover, tripartite consultative mechanisms do not exist, labour laws and regulations relating to compliance with international labour obligations are out of date and labour market institutions, such as collective bargaining, have gaps.⁴⁸ While a minimum wage has been adopted, migrant workers are excluded from its coverage.⁴⁹

Without productive employment, achieving the goals of decent living standards, social and economic integration, personal fulfilment and social development will be difficult. Maldives' economy is highly vulnerable to shocks with limited job creation opportunities. Therefore, employment creation efforts must be increased through sustainable and resilient development with decent work mainstreamed throughout all sectors.

Adequate infrastructure is a prerequisite for sustainable economic growth and social development.

In particular, transport systems in and between atolls and infrastructure relating to tourism and fisheries are needed, thus laying a foundation for improving the quality of life. In the absence of accessible, affordable and reliable infrastructure, poor people pay heavily in time, money and health.

Atolls are geographically isolated and, combined with an absence of physical and institutional infrastructure, these island communities face major difficulties securing employment and livelihood opportunities. Overcoming these challenges is essential to achieving the SDGs and its principal objective to “leave no one behind.”

Community infrastructure development through local resource-based approaches can help overcome these challenges. Community infrastructure refers to small-scale infrastructure within and around local communities that are not managed and maintained by the central government or sectoral agencies. The government's decentralization policies should bring much of the decision-making on issues facing each island to the local councils and island councils will have more resources to implement policies that can improve the general conditions of the island.

Community infrastructure works are often carried out through community planning, participation and operation, thereby generating direct employment and skills development opportunities for community members and, as such, inclusive development can enhance sustainability prospects. The construction and maintenance of community infrastructure has great employment absorption potential and because a substantial proportion of these workers are unskilled, for many, including women and youth, such projects are often their entry point to paid labour. Interventions could include development and management of public areas, such as parks and sports facilities.

Box 3: Benefits of employment-intensive infrastructure investment

⁴⁷ ILO (2020). Young People Not in Employment, Education or Training, Technical brief No. 3, p. 7-8.

⁴⁸ Ministry of Economic Development (2020). Rapid Livelihood Assessment. Impact of the COVID-19 crisis in the Maldives, MED and UNDP, p. 43.

⁴⁹ www.southasiamonitor.org/index.php/maldives/maldives-fixes-minimum-wages-excludes-expatriate-workers.

Spending on infrastructure represents between 40 to 60 percent of public investment in developing countries. Local resource-based approaches have successfully been applied in the construction and maintenance of roads, bridges, drains, water supplies, irrigation canals and soil and water conservation structures. Drawn from a sizable number of studies of pilot and large-scale local resource-based programmes in countries as different as Cambodia, Ghana, Indonesia, Laos, Lesotho, Madagascar, Rwanda, Thailand and Zimbabwe, the conclusions are that for the same investment and without compromising on quality the approach:

- ✓ is generally, in financial terms, about 10 to 30 percent cheaper than the more equipment intensive options;
- ✓ reduces foreign exchange requirements by 50 to 60 percent; and
- ✓ creates three to five times more employment for the same amount of investment – particularly for unskilled and semi-skilled labour – thus contributing to the monetization of the local rural economy and opening up possibilities for local economic development, typically with a multiplier effect of 1.5 to 2.8.

Reference: International Labour Organization ASIST Source Book 2010.

A solid system of technical education and vocational training in Maldives remains a work in progress. A quality technical and vocational education and training (TVET) system can contribute to addressing both unemployment and the situation for those not in employment, education or training (NEET). Maldives' vocational training system is evolving with increasing attention on the part of the government to providing alternative skill pathways for young Maldivians to take up opportunities in the labour market. The current system is supply driven and no data establishes with accuracy the nature and quantity of demand for skills in the country.⁵⁰ International experience, however, indicates that well performing TVET systems involve close collaboration between the private sector and potential employers and learning institutions throughout the process of assessing skill needs, formulating curricula, delivering training, evaluating performance, etc.⁵¹

During consultations on the SDG Roadmap, participants mentioned the lack of effective dialogue among stakeholders in the private sector, government and training institutions, including civil society groups, to allow coordination, planning and anticipation in building the skills needed in the country. Limited accessibility to opportunities for youth in the atolls was also mentioned, pointing to issues of equity and the need for more decentralized approaches through which local communities can have a bigger saying and means to adapt learning opportunities to their needs. Maldives is implementing various reforms and programmes to address the gaps identified and enhance equity. With the same concern about employability, the government has scaled up efforts in higher education. This includes the establishment of a full-fledged Ministry of Higher Education, expansion of the local educational offer and the announcement of free education up to completion of an undergraduate degree in the country or financial assistance for earning a degree abroad.⁵²

The Maldives Education Sector Plan 2019-2023 foresees important investments in education, including higher education and TVET.⁵³ The MAPS engagement analysis of the implications of its implementation and projections through 2027 suggests it can accelerate the skilling of the population increasing the pool of high and medium-skilled labour as compared to projections based on current

⁵⁰ Ministry of Education (2019). Maldives Education Sector Analysis, Government of Maldives and the Global Partnership for Education, February 2019, p. 212.

⁵¹ Asian Development Bank and Australia Aid (2014). Innovative Strategies in Technical and Vocational Education and Training for Accelerated Human Resource Development in South Asia, Asian Development Bank, p. 39-42.

⁵² www.the-businessreport.com/article/today-access-to-education-in-the-maldives-is-free/.

⁵³ See Annex 4 for the results of the CGE modeling of an increase in public spending in education.

expenditure levels. The analysis similarly shows a stronger impact in productivity as well as on poverty reduction and inequality (See Annex 4 for a technical note and analysis of a CGE modelling of an increased in public spending on education in Maldives).

Box 4: Bangladesh model on technical and vocational education and training

The Bangladesh system for technical and vocational education and training (TVET) allows for the recognition of skills workers have acquired in the informal sector and includes post-secondary qualifications up to diploma level. The new qualifications under the National Technical and Vocational Qualification Framework (NTVQF) are offered in formal education and training, as well as workplace training and all training provided by public and private organizations.

The NTVQF, an essential component of the government's National Skills Development Policy (Ministry of Education, 2011), is intended to accomplish a wide range of goals in relation to TVET reform, the introduction of competency-based training and assessment and quality assurance. The NTVQF aims specifically to:

- expand the number of qualifications available to reflect the changing occupational and skills profiles in both domestic and international labour markets;
- support stronger integration of skills training in community organizations, schools, training institutions and the workplace by providing a common national benchmark for qualifications up to, but not including university degrees;
- provide formal recognition of workplace skills obtained in both the formal and informal economies;
- improve employability skills and increase their productivity;
- provide a new benchmark for international recognition of the skills and knowledge of Bangladeshi workers, who are recognized. introduce consistent designation of credentials for formal skills-based education and training; and
- support lifelong learning by providing recognized pathways for workers to raise the level of their knowledge and skills throughout their working lives and beyond.

The NTVQF is aligned with other broader national policies for the expansion of TVET opportunities at post-primary level, focusing on improving the employability and income level of adolescents, youth and adults (of both sexes), child labourers, those with low levels of literacy and those in rural areas (ILO, 2009). These other national policies are: the National Education Policy (2010), the Non-Formal Education Policy (2006), the National Youth Policy (2003), the National Workforce Strategy (2008) and the National Skills Development Policy.

The Bangladesh TVET system also encourages the strong participation of employers and workers groups at all levels of implementation.

Maldives has made significant achievements in improving the health of the population. Several indicators point to bettering health outcomes in Maldives, such as improvements in life expectancy, child survival and maternal mortality and the eradication of many infectious diseases.⁵⁴ However, the sexual and reproductive health situation remains a concern. Maldives continues to be among the

⁵⁴ UNICEF (2021). Situation Analysis of Children and Youth in the Maldives, UNICEF Maldives Country Office, October 2021, p. 2.

countries in the region with high unmet family planning needs, at 31 percent. The contraceptive use rate has declined from 34 percent in 2004 to 14.7 percent in 2019.⁵⁵

Higher living standards and rapid urbanization have shifted traditional modes of life and favoured the adoption of risk factors for non-communicable diseases, such as tobacco use, sedentary lifestyles, consumption of unhealthy foods and inadequate consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables, which are not readily available in Maldives due to limited production and complex logistical issues. Non-communicable diseases have become the first cause of mortality in Maldives accounting for 84 percent of deaths in the country.⁵⁶ Cardiovascular disease, chronic respiratory diseases, accidents and injuries, diabetes and cancers are the leading causes of death.⁵⁷ Going forward, efforts need to build upon and preserve development gains while responding to emerging challenges, such as non-communicable diseases (NCD), with equity.

The public sector accounts for the largest share of the health system in Maldives. Services are provided through a three-tier system which includes essential health centres in every inhabited island and ambulances for emergency transfer in every atoll. 88 percent of the health personnel works in the public sector and, overall, relies significantly on foreign labour: 64 percent of physicians and 42 percent of nurses in 2019 were foreigners.⁵⁸ The United Nations has highlighted that problems in attracting and retaining staff and other organizational issues are complicating the smooth delivery of health services in the country.⁵⁹ An analysis by UNICEF on the country's health services notes that the high percentage of foreign workers in the health sector undermines the development of local skills and health knowledge and affects the quality of services.⁶⁰ Maldives will become a complete aged society by the year 2030, with the demand for long-term care significantly increasing. Preparation and investments for a sustainable long-term care system need to be in place to avoid relying on institutional-based care only. Expanding support to family and community-based care should be considered, taking into account that women are likely to be the main caregivers for older persons.

The establishment of public health insurance has contributed toward achieving universal health access in Maldives, but rapid cost increases are risking its fiscal sustainability. The Aasandha health insurance is fully funded by the public budget. At roughly MVR 1 billion per year over the recent past, the insurance represents between 3 and 5 percent of government expenditures. Most of the costs are concentrated in pharmaceuticals, in-patient and out-patient services and medical treatment abroad.⁶¹ Health expenditures, in total, account for 20 percent of total government expenditures⁶² and are increasing at a high pace, with a 9.9 percent increase per annum between 2016 and 2019.⁶³ Expenditures are concentrated on people above 50 who are more affected by chronic diseases. As the population ages, expenditures tend to increase as more people who are living longer are affected by non-communicable diseases.⁶⁴

While the Aasandha health insurance provides financial protection for health expenditures to households, out-of-pocket expenditures represented 19 percent of health expenditures in the country

⁵⁵ www.un.org/development/desa/pd/data/world-contraceptive-use#:~:text=World%20Contraceptive%20Use%202021&text=%22By%202030%2C%20ensure%20universal%20access,into%20national%20strategies%20and%20programmes%22.

⁵⁶ United Nations Maldives (2020). Common Country Analysis, December 2020, p. 32.

⁵⁷ Ministry of Health (2021). Maldives Health Profile 2019, p. 20.

⁵⁸ Maldives Bureau of Statistics (2021). World Health Day. Building a fairer, healthier world.

⁵⁹ United Nations Maldives (2020). Common Country Analysis, December 2020, p. 33.

⁶⁰ UNICEF (2013). Study of the Decentralization Process in the Maldives with reference to the impact on services to children, UNICEF, paragraph 120.

⁶¹ Ministry of Finance (2020). Medium-Term Fiscal Strategy 2021-2023, 31 July 2020, p. 42.

⁶² WHO 2019 Health SDG Profile: Maldives

⁶³ UNFPA (2021). Demographic Transition and Maldives Economy: Trends, Challenges and Future Prospects, p. 18.

⁶⁴ UNFPA (2021). Demographic Transition and Maldives Economy: Trends, Challenges and Future Prospects, p. 19.

in 2016 according to the World Health Organization (WHO). The breakdown of main expenditure items in overall health expenditures parallels that of the health insurance, with the bulk of spending on in- and out-patient services and pharmaceuticals. Expenditures on preventive health have been estimated at 0.5 percent of overall expenditures over the period 2015-2017.⁶⁵ These figures reflect an imbalance in the allocation of resources in the health system vis-à-vis the nature of the health conditions of the population.

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed structural vulnerabilities of the health system in Maldives and accelerated the adoption of solutions, such as the use of telemedicine, which can be the foundation of more structural changes in future. The National Recovery and Resilience Plan also emphasized the expansion of telemedicine as an avenue to increase access to health services. The increase in non-communicable diseases and other emerging concerns, such as the roll back in vaccination rates, require a stronger effort placed on preventive rather than curative tactics. Such an approach will also help address the fiscal sustainability of the health system. The National Recovery and Resilience Plan states the intention to promote preventive care and this shift should be accelerated.

Several groups are particularly vulnerable to poverty and other risks, including children, youth, women and migrants, and the current development model and safety nets are not reaching all those at need. Children are more at risk than other age groups of suffering multidimensional poverty in Maldives. 34 percent of children (0-17 years old) live in multidimensional poverty.⁶⁶ Children in poor households living in atolls have less access to opportunities. For example, the COVID-19 pandemic affected access to education particularly among those unable to access the internet at home. Children are significantly affected by malnutrition, experiencing stunting, wasting and being underweight, pointing to acute and chronic malnutrition, even if child nutrition has improved over time.⁶⁷ UNICEF points to areas of increasing concern, which are overweight and obesity among children and anemia.⁶⁸ Overall, Maldives spends less on human capital than countries at similar fertility levels and development.⁶⁹ This is due in part to the structure of public spending which is skewed towards old age.

Youth are the vital to realizing the demographic transition, but many fail to access opportunities to realize their potential. Limited jobs and economic opportunities, especially in the atolls, is a major concern for young people. As discussed above, promoting a dynamic private sector, diversifying the economy, supporting small- and medium-sized enterprises and entrepreneurship and building skills through quality technical and vocational education and training would go a long way in addressing a core concern of young Maldivians. Providing childcare support and other services and encouragement to young women will allow them to apply their competencies and talent for socio-economic advancement. Young children dropping out of school after basic secondary education are particularly vulnerable. They may be exposed to drugs and crime, gang recruitment and unable to find jobs, rehabilitation and support, with long term consequences.⁷⁰

The majority of drug users in Maldives are in the age range of 15-19 years old⁷¹ and the legal framework requires incarceration for drug offenses including possession for personal consumption, although alternative sentencing and drug courts are at conceptual stages with Maldives working with partners such as the European Union for support in this area. Under the current circumstances,

⁶⁵ United Nations Maldives (2020). Common Country Analysis, December 2020, p.34.

⁶⁶ Maldives Bureau of Statistics (2020). National Multidimensional Poverty in Maldives 2020, National Statistics Bureau, Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative and UNICEF Maldives Country Office, p. 49.

⁶⁷ IFRC (2021). Climate Change impacts on Health and Livelihoods. Maldives Assessment, IFRC, April 2021

⁶⁸ UNICEF (2021). Situation Analysis of Children and Youth in the Maldives, UNICEF Country Office, October 2021, p. 12.

⁶⁹ UNFPA (2021). Demographic Transition and Maldives Economy: Trends, Challenges and Future Prospects, p. 16.

⁷⁰ United Nations Maldives (2020). Common Country Analysis, December 2020, p.70.

⁷¹ World Bank (2020). Maldives systemic Country Diagnostic Update, Report Number: 157675-MV, p.35.

however, a high percentage of those incarcerated (80 percent) are in prison for drug charges and places in court-determined rehabilitation programmes are insufficient, with long waiting lists. Furthermore, Maldives has a high incarceration rate (15 times higher than India, for example) despite much lower incidence of violent crime.⁷² Conditions in prisons are inadequate, especially for juveniles for whom neither the material conditions (e.g., segregation of juveniles from adults) nor services (e.g., psychological support, education and rehabilitation) are appropriate.⁷³

The Juvenile Justice Act of 2019 defines the rights of children and adolescents in conflict with law and promotes prevention, but its provisions are not yet fully implemented in practice.⁷⁴ A sense of frustration, exclusion and isolation among the youth requires immediate attention.⁷⁵ In addition to economic opportunities, avenues must be opened for engagement and participation in public life by young men and women and their voices need to be heard on issues related to their communities and that affect their life. The strengthening of the decentralization process offers an opportunity to do so.

Despite development gains made by women in Maldives, important gender gaps persist. Some of these have been discussed above and relate to women's economic participation and their disproportionate burden of unpaid care work. For instance, in aggregate terms, counting women's unpaid work increases their contribution to labour production by 48 percent.⁷⁶ Women have been harder hit by the COVID-19 pandemic than their male counterparts on several counts: women are more likely to lose income and employment; their burden of caring for the sick and elderly increases; women are overrepresented among health workers; and women are more vulnerable to mental and emotional health stresses, among others. According to the Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2016, female-headed households show higher rates of income poverty (8.8 percent) than male-headed households (7.8 percent), although no difference is seen in the level of multidimensional poverty between female-headed and male-headed households.⁷⁷ The gender wage gap is 20 percent according to the Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2016.

Women participation in public life and decision-making is very limited in Maldives. Women hold only four seats in parliament, or 4.6 percent. Women judges represent 4 percent of total sitting judges. And while women represent 60 percent of the civil service, they are mostly engaged in general, managerial and support service roles, whereas men hold 60 percent of senior level positions.⁷⁸ Recent governmental decisions show a positive commitment to enhance opportunities for women's public participation. This is reflected in appointments to the cabinet and other executive offices and an amendment to the Decentralization Act that establishes a 33 percent quota for women in local councils.

Other recent reforms include the holding of elections for Women's Development Committees together with local elections and the participation of both men and women in the selection of Women Development Committees' members. Women secured 370 seats of the potential 384 seats reserved for women at island and city councils held in April 2021.⁷⁹ ⁸⁰ Attempts to establish a similar quota for

⁷² UNDP (2019). Youth Vulnerability in the Maldives, National Counter Terrorism Center and UNDP, p. 18.

⁷³ United Nations Maldives (2020). Common Country Analysis, December 2020, p. 9.

⁷⁴ United Nations Maldives (2020). Common Country Analysis, December 2020, p. 12.

⁷⁵ UNDP (2019). Youth Vulnerability in the Maldives, National Counter Terrorism Center and UNDP, p. 4.

⁷⁶ UNFPA (2021). Demographic Transition and Maldives' Economy: Trends, Challenges and Future Prospects, 19 June 2021 draft, p. 21.

⁷⁷ Maldives Bureau of Statistics (2020). National Multidimensional Poverty in Maldives 2020, Maldives Bureau of Statistics, Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative and UNICEF Maldives Country Office, p. 50.

⁷⁸ Ministry of Gender, Family and Social Services (2019). Review of the progress and remaining challenges in implementing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA) in the Maldives, 3 June 2019, pp. 4 and 6.

⁷⁹ www.democracyspeaks.org/blog/gains-women-and-democracy-local-council-elections-maldives.

⁸⁰ USAID and International Foundation for Electoral Systems (2021). Elections in the Maldives. 2021 Local Council Elections. Frequently Asked Questions, 7 April 2021, p. 4.

women representation in parliament have failed in the past. The encouraging result of the local council elections shows that instruments such as quotas can be useful in opening opportunities to women. But a comprehensive approach is necessary which tackles several barriers to women’s political participation, including limited mobility, fears of negative media coverage and cyber bullying, lack of support services to reconcile their engagement with childcare and other household tasks and limited networking opportunities and financial resources, among others.⁸¹

Emerging concerns in relation to gender equality are associated with the expansion of conservative views leading to changing perceptions on the role of women in society. The Rights’ Side Survey conducted by the Human Rights Commission of Maldives in 2020 noted a worrying decline in support for gender equality and convictions toward equal rights for women and found the articulation of a narrative that gender equality is incompatible with Islam. The survey results show increasing acceptance of a subordinate role for women and of violence against women.⁸² Available data indicate that one in four Maldivian women experience gender-based violence during their lifetime.⁸³ Services for victims of gender-based violence are limited and only accessible following lengthy procedures. For instance, screening for gender-based violence is not done at health facilities and there are no operational shelters for victims of gender-based violence.⁸⁴

The Government of Maldives is committed to gender equality, but beyond policies and regulatory frameworks, the need to work closely with communities and leaders and women themselves to protect the human rights of women and to change mindsets, is urgent. Efforts must be focused on behavioural shifts, providing role models for young girls for participation in business, politics and social life, working through the media, education system and local government institutions at all levels of society.

Box 5: Viet Nam – How to inspire a shift in dominant gender norms?

In Viet Nam, women face numerous challenges related to work and careers, including discriminatory hiring and promotion practices, lack of support from senior leaders and ignorance of the demanding roles they have within the home and community. For example, women hold fewer than 10 percent of senior government positions (ministers, vice ministers or general directors in the civil service).

Building upon a UNDP Nepal initiative, the #HowAbnormal campaign in Viet Nam was adopted to flip gender roles. Implemented in collaboration with UN Women, UNFPA and local social media and communication organizations, the campaign created short videos to inspire young women and men to rethink dominant gender norms. The campaign was amplified through a film that went viral nationwide, with more than 91,000 views through 2016. The campaign momentum also inspired a photo exhibition entitled “Women can do.” The exhibition showcased photos taken by journalist Nguyen Thi Quynh Hoa, the campaign’s general manager that depicted four Vietnamese women representing four fields: the first female airline captain, a Golden Ball award winning female footballer, an outstanding female student at the University of Fire Fighting and Prevention and the CEO of Honeywell Indochina, a multinational corporation. The exhibition was hosted at a number of universities in 2017, as well as the Women’s Museum, advocating for the deconstruction of gender stereotypes.

⁸¹ UNDP (2017). Women’s Political Participation in the Maldives, Issue Brief.

⁸² Human Rights Commission of the Maldives (2020). The Rights’ Side of Life. Reflecting 15 Years, Human Rights Commission of the Maldives, UNDP and the Family Protection Authority, p. 65.

⁸³ Ministry of Health (2019). Maldives Demographic and Health Survey 2019.

⁸⁴ United Nations Maldives (2020). Common Country Analysis, December 2020, p. 39.

Studies confirm the importance of role models to challenge and eventually change dominant gender norms. The campaign was to be scaled to other countries in the region to further invest in challenging dominant gender norms throughout the region.

Reference: <file:///C:/Users/bernal/Downloads/Advance%20Gender%20Equality%20&%20Womens%20Empowerment.pdf> (accessed 15 January 2022).

Migrants represent a significant population group in Maldives making major contributions to the economy and social sectors, but many remain highly vulnerable and subject to discrimination. Migrant workers make up over 25 percent of the total population in Maldives, with the population of migrant men increasing faster than migrant women, presumably due to a demand for workers in the construction sector.⁹⁴ Currently, migrant workers not only constitute one fourth of the country's population but, to a large extent, also make up most of the workforce. They are mostly young men between the ages of 20 and 34, with women constituting 12 percent of foreign nationals.⁹⁵ Despite government efforts, over 63,000 migrants are assumed to be undocumented, vulnerable to exploitation. Migrant workers make up the majority of the population on resort islands (59.1 percent) and industrial islands (76.9 percent), but the largest numbers of migrants live in Addu City and Malé, with 40 percent of all foreign residents concentrated in Malé.⁹⁶

Residing outside of Malé, especially in remote and sparsely populated atolls, leaves migrants vulnerable to health risks since only basic clinical services are available at the resorts and domestic travel is slow and costly. In addition, in order to purchase health insurance and see a doctor in a public facility, migrants must have legal status. Therefore, the high number of migrants with irregular status have severely limited access to primary care and practically no access to hospital treatment, even in emergency cases. Their vulnerability is further exacerbated in the context of the pandemic. Similarly, most migrant workers occupy sub-standard accommodation and crowded labour quarters. The pre-existing vulnerabilities of the migrant population in terms of health and socio-economic wellbeing, including the lack of equal access to basic rights to social protection and health services and adequate housing, have worsened during COVID-19, particularly due to the border closures and lockdown in the greater Malé area.

Maldives has a functional social protection system. However, it needs to evolve to effectively reach those in need of assistance and cater to the expectations of a middle-income society. Maldives have shown commitment to socio-economic development by investing in social services for the population. Over time, it established several social protection programmes to respond to the needs of vulnerable groups. These include a disability allowance, a single parent and foster parent benefit schemes, an income assurance for fishers and a conditional staple food cash transfer for poor families administered by the National Social Protection Agency. A pension system with a contributory component (Maldives Retirement Pension Scheme) and a non-contributory component (Old Age Basic Pension) seeks to provide a minimum income to those 65 years old and older. In 2014, a Senior Citizen Allowance was established on top of the Old Age Basic Pension. Other government services exist for children under state care, women and child victims of violence and elderly with no caretaker or in need of assistance.

The social protection system of Maldives suffers from several weaknesses which undermine its effectiveness in protecting the population from risks and tackling inequality. The social protection system is fragmented with limited linkages across programmes and weak coordination among the entities responsible for them, including inadequate datasets of beneficiaries.⁸⁵ In addition, the system is ill-defined and highly centralized. An analysis of the single parent and foster parent schemes highlighted specific design and operational issues that result in stigma and limited coverage of the

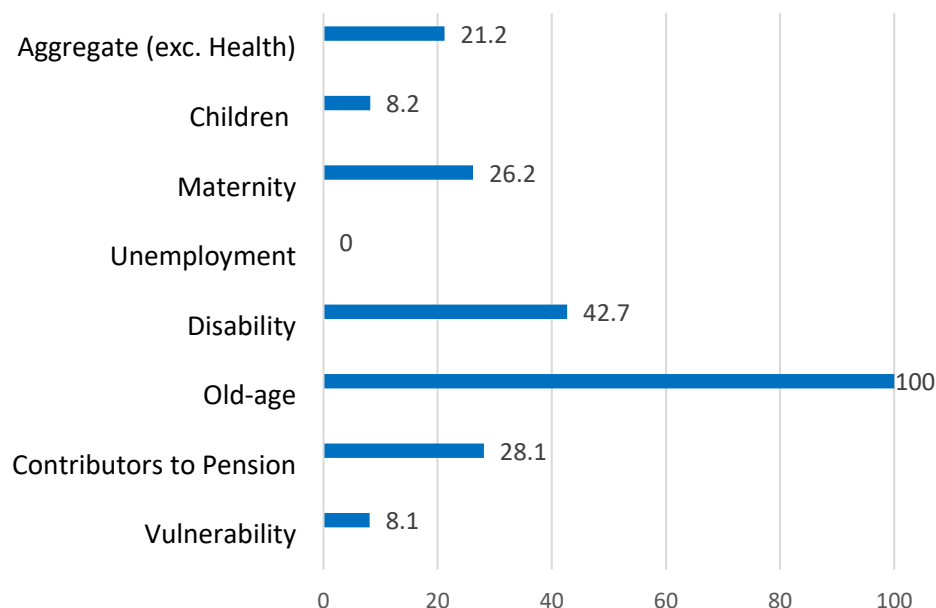
⁸⁵ UNICEF Country Office (October 2021). Situation Analysis of Children and Youth in the Maldives, p. 26.

population in need. The application procedures are cumbersome, potential beneficiaries are not aware of the schemes and how they may benefit, the eligibility requirements result in exclusion errors, while the means test requirement does not incentivize exiting poverty because it would exclude beneficiaries from the scheme. The schemes lack a holistic approach to beneficiary needs; they are narrowly concerned with providing financial assistance through cash transfers but don't provide complementary support, such as nutrition information, financial literacy, etc., that would improve the development impact of the schemes, nor do they provide a monitoring and evaluation framework.⁸⁶

Similar issues arise in relation to the disability allowance, with an analysis over the period 2015-2017 showing only 25.5 percent of people with disabilities access the benefit and it has no impact on the quality of life of people receiving the allowance. Services are not available to assist the transition to work for children with special education needs once they complete secondary education.⁸⁷ A more holistic approach responding to the needs of people with disabilities throughout the lifecycle would be necessary.

Figure 4 below provides social protection data in Maldives in relation to SDG 1.3.1 indicators. The results explain that three distinct types of old-age benefit systems contributed to achieving 100 percent coverage of social protection for old age, whereas social protection for children (8.2 percent) and working aged populations leave these groups still vulnerable. A social protection system does not exist for unemployment or employment injuries – though work is on-going to fill this gap, which means that those who become unemployed or have work-related injuries immediately fall under the category of whatever social allowance is accessible to everyone.

Figure 4: SDG 1.3.1 Effective social protection coverage by population group (%)



Source: World Social Protection Data Dashboards, www.social-protection.org/gimi/WSPDB.action?id=32.

During the MAPS engagement consultations, participants underscored weaknesses in the legislative framework underpinning social protection programmes and reflected on the need for reform, including better targeting. The stakeholder survey, meanwhile, highlighted insufficient social support systems, such as limited social protection and access and quality of health care, as top challenges for resilience in the country. Reform of the social protection system, and social spending more broadly,

⁸⁶See: Druzca, Kristie and Anh Tran (2021). Evaluation of the Single Parent and Foster Care Social Protection Schemes in the Maldives. UNICEF, July 2021.

⁸⁷ United Nations Maldives (December 2020). Common Country Analysis, p. 76.

should aim at establishing social assistance for the poor and to better cover individuals throughout their lifecycle and risks. The system needs to proactively identify and provide support to people and households in need. In the Maldivian context, this implies creating the right delivery mechanisms at local level with full involvement of local councils, Women’s Development Committees and civil society.

Box 6: Development of an employment insurance scheme in Indonesia

An employment insurance scheme, called *Jaminan Kehilangan Pekerjaan*, was established in Indonesia by law and government regulation which came into effect in 2020 and 2021, respectively. Below is a summary the process through which the employment insurance scheme in Indonesia came into being.

In the late 2010s, after more than a decade of discussions, the establishment of an employment insurance system as part of an improved social protection policy had become a priority among national stakeholders in Indonesia. Indonesian stakeholders actively debated the possibility of establishing a comprehensive unemployment protection system that effectively harmonizes unemployment benefits, public employment services and re-skilling programmes.

Over five years, several International Labour Organization (ILO) projects provided technical assistance to facilitate this national dialogue process on the possible introduction of an employment insurance scheme in Indonesia. An important part of this process was raising knowledge and awareness among public and private stakeholders about the meaning and potential parameters for unemployment protection in the Indonesian context. For that purpose, ILO held several workshops, discussions, meetings and technical advisory missions. As a result, in January 2018, the Indonesian Minister of Manpower committed in Parliament to conduct a study on establishing an employment insurance system.

In 2018, a series of meetings with employers, workers and government officials, conducted by ILO, facilitated discussions on the preparation of position papers concerning elements of an employment insurance system. Many stakeholders, including the Ministry of Finance and an employers’ organization (APINDO), indicated the need for a complete review of various social protection schemes. The Ministry of Finance called for a review of current laws surrounding severance payments, the old-age savings provident fund and housing regulations. In response, the discussion paper “Exploring policy options to design an employment insurance scheme in Indonesia” was submitted in March 2020. To promote social dialogue and understand the perspectives of workers and employers, ILO organized the “Training workshop on international labour standards on social security and employment insurance” in 2020.

The ILO conducted several knowledge creation activities such as “Actuarial analysis of a proposed unemployment insurance scheme in Indonesia,” “Administrative procedures of social security and employment services in Indonesia,” and “Feasibility study on administrations and operations for implementing employment insurance in Indonesia.” These materials were presented at conferences and meetings and ILO shared the reports themselves with the government as input for the development of regulations.

Box 7: Mauritius Marshall Plan and Social Register

Mauritius adopted a Marshall Plan to tackle social exclusion and vulnerability through an integrated approach. The plan is underpinned by an analysis of the socio-economic, cultural and historical context of the country to shed light on the root causes of poverty and social exclusion and to understand the multiple dimensions of poverty and inequality and how they can interplay. The Marshall Plan consists

of a set of nearly 40 reforms and projects, which are inter-sectoral interventions to address specific deprivations of disadvantaged groups, such as income security, housing, employment, education, among others.

A key component of the Marshall Plan was the implementation of the *Social Integration and Empowerment Bill*, which provides the legislative framework for the Social Contract, a conditional cash transfer scheme designed to enhance the human and social capital of vulnerable groups. To reach those who need support the most first, beneficiaries of the Social Contract are targeted through the Social Register of Mauritius, which provides crucial data for social inclusion policies. Participants in the Social Contract are incentivized to use services for education, skills and economic empowerment. Notably, the registry tracks school attendance of children from households that receive a child grant.

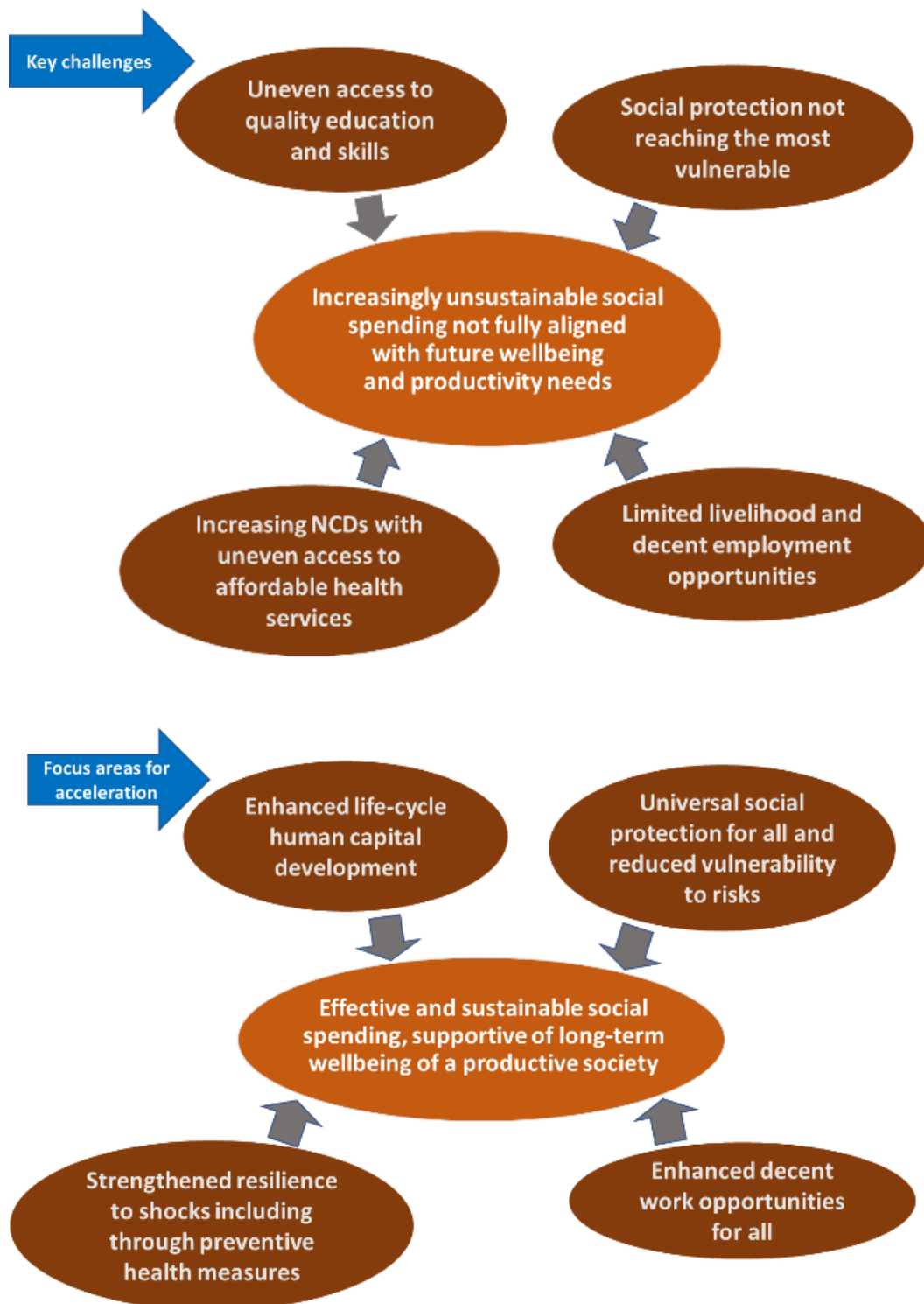
The Social Register of Mauritius was introduced in 2012 as a technological and administrative solution to improve the efficiency of social programmes. It is a centralized database of beneficiaries administered by a single entity, the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions. The Social Register aims to:

- better target beneficiaries of social programmes;
- manage social programmes in an integrated way;
- better harmonize the criteria for the different social programmes run by different ministries; and
- analyse cyclical and structural poverty reduction policies.

Findings from the 2017 Household Budget Survey of Statistics Mauritius (2018) shows the potential impact of reforms on poverty and inequality dynamics, suggesting that for the first time in 16 years, Mauritius experienced a reduction in income inequality, an increase in income share held by the lowest 20 percent of households and an increase in education enrolment rates. The country is moving to the next stage of implementation of the Social Contract – increasing access of the Contract’s participants to livelihoods and employment services through training, job intermediation and other support activities. Thanks to the income support scheme, poor households are lifted out of poverty and with the economic empowerment scheme, the hope is that they stay out of it.

Reference: UNDESA and ILO (2021). Global research on governance and social protection. Case studies of Mauritius and Fiji.

Figure 5: People – Key development challenges and focus areas for acceleration



Planet

The characteristics of Maldives as a small island developing state need to be carefully considered because the environment underpins sustainable development and the wellbeing of the country. Moreover, the combination of small and low-lying surfaces places a premium on land-use, especially in the very densely inhabited capital. There is thus competition for multiple uses of land, resulting in a lack of options in terms of waste disposal, water management, coastal settlements and economic

diversification. According to the *2016 Maldives State of the Environment Report*, the primary drivers of environmental change in Maldives are climate change, population growth, urbanization and economic growth. These factors directly or indirectly impact the environment and bring about habitat destruction, biodiversity loss and deteriorate air and water quality. Resilience for Maldives will entail the protection and effective management of marine and terrestrial biodiversity and ecosystems. It also requires strengthening coastal protection and infrastructure, including making use of nature-based solutions.

Weaknesses exist in the environmental assessment, planning, management and enforcement systems. It is recognized that effective environmental management hinges on reliable and up-to-date data on the state of the environment. While the country has in place a comprehensive system of environmental laws and policies, their effectiveness is hampered by fragmentation and lack of coordination. Concerns are also raised about the effectiveness and integrity of environmental impact assessments and the skills and capacity for environmental management.

Invasive species pose a risk to the country's economy and biodiversity. Maldives is frequented by ships from all over the world and water discharge is thought to be a major pathway to the introduction of invasive alien species.⁸⁸ Maldives has already experienced widespread destruction of coconut palms by the coconut hispid beetle, as uncontrolled imports of plant matter had devastating effects on local biodiversity. Island species populations tend to be small, localized and highly specialized and thus highly vulnerable to changes and can easily be driven to extinction.

Strengthened environmental management relies on the availability of data and information to inform evidence-based decision-making. Data on key environmental indicators enables tracking of progress against relevant SDG and national targets. Investment in data collection and processing covering environmental indicators is needed. There is also a need for strengthened institutional capacity and increased coordination between different government agencies at the horizontal level around issues such as waste management, water resources and infrastructure development. Vertically, the completion of the decentralization process needs to ensure that environmental issues do not fall victim to jurisdictional siloes. Biodiversity protection, for example, ought to be considered a cross-cutting issue, integrated into spatial planning and coastal zone management. The enforcement of environmental law needs to be stepped up.

Effective environmental monitoring (air, water, soil, marine environment), as well as assessment capacity, is needed to inform policymakers. Developing national capacities in decision support tools to assist policymakers and managers to better grasp the people-, planet- and prosperity-related outcomes of sustainable ecosystem management for economic recovery and growth will be strategic. A data-driven approach is essential to compare benefits between blue/green economic recovery options and a business-as-usual scenario in terms of jobs, growth, inequality and sustainability through investment in Maldives' nature-based assets. Overall, integrated planning and evidence-based decisions, not only across policy areas but also between the central and island levels of government, is critical to support sustainable and inclusive development in the country. Strengthening the capacity for environmental assessment and planning, with effective linkages to management of the environment at the island level, could serve as a lever for change. Clear linkages exist between effectiveness of decentralization and coordination between the Ministry of Environment, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Ministry of Fisheries and the Ministry of Tourism.

Over-exploitation and extraction of natural resources via unregulated and unsustainable practices is a challenge. The country's narrow and fragile resource-based economy means that careful

⁸⁸ Maldives 6th National Report on the Convention on Biological Diversity, <https://chm.cbd.int/database/record?documentID=247054>

management of the environment is essential. The main threats to biological diversity in Maldives are habitat destruction and overexploitation. Habitat destruction arises from coastal development activities such as harbour development and land reclamation. The extent of the challenge is illustrated by the Environmental Performance Index, which assesses countries' actions toward retaining natural ecosystems and protecting the full range of biodiversity within their borders, which lists Maldives in last place under the "Biodiversity and Habitat" category in 2020.⁸⁹

The types of crops grown and the quality of soil in Maldives are limited, so threats (e.g., large amounts of chemical fertilizers, insecticides and pesticides used in commercial agriculture) could lead to loss of habitat, species and ecosystems.⁹⁰ Freshwater resources are severely limited, with rainwater harvesting being the primary source of drinking water in most of the outer islands and groundwater used for washing, agriculture and other domestic uses. Groundwater, which accumulates in rainwater recharged aquifers at shallow depths, is vulnerable to contamination from inadequate sanitation facilities and other human activities, run-off from solid waste (leaching), excessive withdrawals and saline intrusion through soil erosion and flooding.

Maldives is vulnerable to climate change impacts and natural hazard risks. With some 70 percent of its infrastructure within 100 metres of shorelines and about 80 percent of its land located less than one metre above sea level, the country has a high exposure to natural hazard risks and a high vulnerability to climate change impacts.⁹¹ Water availability is also being affected by changing weather patterns, causing some islands to face water shortages. Coral reefs provide natural protection of the islands and serve as a major resource for the Maldivian economy; however, the reefs are being affected by coral bleaching caused by warming sea-surface temperatures. Damage to coral reefs, through a combination of climate impacts and human activities, increases the vulnerability of islands to storms and flooding. As sea levels rise, beaches are being eroded and saltwater is intruding into groundwater, rendering it unfit for use.

The impact of climate change for Maldives is broad and touches all aspects of life. Ocean acidification, sea surface temperature increases, sea level rise, coastal erosion and more severe and frequent extreme weather events put at risk critical infrastructure, human settlements, fresh water and livelihoods, increasing the likelihood of disaster displacement.⁹² In this context, a major priority for Maldives is adaptation to climate change, strengthening community-based resilience and preparedness to disaster, as these are likely to become more frequent and intense over time.

Population growth, rapid economic growth and urbanization are main drivers of vulnerability and lead to increased competition for natural resources. Some of the effects include biodiversity loss, over exploitation of marine resources, clearance of vegetation for development, increase in the use of chemicals through fertilizers and pesticides in agriculture and pollution and waste, putting at risk fragile ecosystems.⁹³ Human disturbances to ecosystems, in particular, undermine the ability of ecosystems to adapt to environmental stressors, further exacerbating the country's vulnerability to climate change and other environmental impacts. Human caused disturbances are more under the country's control to avoid and mitigate.

Climate change severely and disproportionately affects the poor, not only because the poor are invariably more exposed and more vulnerable to climate-related impacts, but also because they have

⁸⁹ Yale University, <https://epi.yale.edu/epi-results/2020/component/bdh>.

⁹⁰ Yale University, <https://epi.yale.edu/epi-results/2020/component/bdh>.

⁹¹ Tariq Masood Ali Khan et al, Relative Sea Level Changes in Maldives and Vulnerability of Land Due to Abnormal Coastal Inundation 25 *Marine Geodesy* 122 (2002).

⁹² UNDRR (2019) www.preventionweb.net/files/68254_682304maldivesdrmstatusreport.pdf.

⁹³ Ministry of Environment and Energy (2015). National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2016-2025, Ministry of Environment and Energy, Republic of Maldives.

less access to resources and social and financial support, including social protection, for their survival. Developing resilient communities would require enhancing coastal protection and investing in local human capacity to respond to emergencies.

Productive infrastructure such as irrigation networks, water conservation, slope protection and land improvement and protection measures have the potential to offer economic benefits, while also protecting the environment and reducing poverty. Employment provides economic benefits, in addition to investments in human capital and dignity through work.

Box 8: Watershed management as part of disaster risk reduction – the Haiti experience

In Haiti, recurring cyclones and hurricanes, with escalating threats from climate change and the intensity and frequency of natural disasters, have compounded the environmental and social impacts and increased the vulnerability of already poor urban and rural households. Haiti's indicator of vulnerability to cyclones is 12.9 out of a scale of 13, making it the most vulnerable of the Caribbean Islands.

In response to Hurricane Jeanne, ILO worked closely with the Government of Haiti, in collaboration with the European Union, IOM, the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, UNDP, WFP and CHF/USAID, on an employment-intensive environmental programme in the city of Gonaives. This programme focused on creating jobs, protecting the environment and building the institutional capacity of local and community actors through 12 federations that were created to focus on six micro-watersheds, a water source for 324,043 inhabitants. As many as 9,000 individuals (54,000 households) directly benefited from the programme through labour-intensive activities (e.g., afforestation and tree nurseries, anti-erosive ditches, reinforcing bridges, river training, etc.).

A community contracting approach helped to clarify roles and responsibilities, rights and obligations and established technical capacities for environmental protection and maintenance systems. The approach also promoted cooperation among workers, local organizations and their federations and local authorities and regional technical departments. Seven professional associations were created and began operating and the 12 federations of local associations which were coordinating all activities helped to recruit workers, select supervisors, monitor and control wage payments and manage food distributions (with WFP). The project contributed to capacity building and social organization, as well as to increased awareness of environmental issues, which has been a key element for sustainable development and the preservation of future livelihoods.

Reference: ILO EIIP Programme Document 2018.

Land-based sources of pollution and improper management of solid waste and wastewater are significant challenges. Solid and hazardous waste management is recognized as a critical environmental issue. On the islands waste collection and disposal is insufficiently managed and controlled, with disposal sites located along vegetation lines or shorelines where the waste is frequently burned at low combustion temperatures. Leachates and unconsolidated wastes enter the lagoon systems and airborne contaminants are released into the atmosphere. Additionally, the use of agro-chemicals contaminates the ground water aquifers and affects coral reef habitats through runoff.

As in many small island developing states, Maldives faces challenges in the management of liquid and solid waste. According to the Strategic Action Plan, at present, only 57 of the population has access to sewage networks, with untreated waste being disposed into the marine environment. The flourishing tourism sector and population growth have compounded the waste situation. The World Bank estimates that resort islands and the international airport generate waste at nearly six times the rate

of the resident local population. While the diversification of tourism from resorts to guesthouses on smaller islands creates development opportunities, it has also intensified waste management challenges. With scattered islands, collection and safe disposal of solid waste is burdensome and expensive, especially transport of waste from islands to regional waste management centres. Open burning is still widely practiced on most islands and no mechanisms are in place to address hazardous, liquid and electronic waste.

The introduction of circular economy principles, as advocated for in the Strategic Action Plan, could help reduce the volume of waste, as well as improve the sorting of the waste stream, enabling the recycling of high value items (metals, plastic bottles) and the safe disposal of medical and hazardous waste.

Box 9: Circular economy

Linear production and consumption patterns, which end with products discarded as waste, are an inefficient use of finite resources and they often result in pollution and environmental degradation. A circular economy is an approach that seeks to tackle the root causes of the problem by eliminating waste and pollution, keeping products and materials in use as long as possible and regenerating nature.

Many entry points exist for a circular economy, with its principles being reflected in the 3Rs (reduce, reuse, recycle). At the design and production stage, life cycle thinking is needed to minimize waste generation by considering product design, alternative and reduced packaging, improvements in product efficiency and improvements in a product's life expectancy. At the end of use stage, turning waste into a resource involves identifying its value and creating markets for recycling and reusing the diverted materials. Small island developing states face barriers, however, related to economies of scale and the identification of appropriate technologies for recycling and reusing.

A key building block for a circular economy is integrated waste management, which encompasses segregation of waste at source, organizing collection systems for solid, liquid and hazardous wastes and eliminating unrestrained dumping and burning.

References: Ellen Macarthur Foundation (2022); UNEP SIDS Waste Management Outlook (2019).

While resorts account for 20 percent of solid waste production, the per capita generation is three times that of other islands,⁹⁴ providing an indication of the relative environmental footprint of resorts. Resorts are responsible for managing the waste generated on their premises. Some send the waste to Thilafushi island for disposal or to a regional waste management facility, if available. While accounts exist of resorts simply burning the waste or dumping it into the ocean, there are also stories of good practices in waste management, such as recycling, composting and awareness raising actions among guests to minimize their footprint in Maldives.⁹⁵ Guest houses depend on local island waste management resources and capacity. The Government of Maldives has undertaken actions towards dealing with the challenges of waste management, including improvements in infrastructure through a regional approach to waste management centres and the commitment to ban single-use plastics, for example.

Island councils carry out waste collection, composting of organic waste and storage for collection of certain waste. However, concerns exist about the opening burning of inorganic waste, including

⁹⁴ World Bank (2020). Maldives Systematic Country Diagnostic Update, Report number: 157675-MV, p. 42.

⁹⁵ See for instance: www.biocycle.net/the-maldives-managing-wastes-in-paradise/.

medical waste, which may release hazardous compounds into the air, as well as pose a risk for groundwater pollution. Island councils levy fees for waste management services, however, revenues generated do not cover the cost of services, not to mention the resources required for maintenance and replacement of equipment.⁹⁶ Migrant labour is employed for waste management, even on small islands, and there is a need to ensure that proper safety equipment is on hand. A skilled workforce is severely lacking in the waste management sector, which could be addressed via technical and vocational training.

Box 10: Steps towards a circular economy in Trinidad and Tobago

The Trinidad and Tobago Solid Waste Management Company Limited (SWMCOL) was established by the government with the mandate to design and implement solid and hazardous waste management systems and advise local government providers on waste management and later also to build engineered landfills and manage recycling programmes. To realize its commitment to sustainability, SWMCOL put in place transfer stations and material recovery facilities to collect and sort recyclable materials, so that only residual non-recyclables are sent to engineered landfills.

A beverage container recycling facility diverts post-consumer beverage containers from waste to recyclables. The facility processes PET (Polyethylene Terephthalate) into flakes usable in the manufacture of furniture, concrete pavers and other products. PET is the strong and lightweight plastic widely used to make water and juice containers. The facility also accepts and processes glass bottles, High-Density Polyethylene (HDPE) beverage bottles, aluminum cans and Tetra Pak cartons, which are sorted and processed for shipment to local and overseas recyclers. SWMCOL has also established a material recovery facility at one of its landfills, where incoming material from various recyclables collection programmes across the island are processed via conveyor belt and waste workers separate them by category. Sorted materials are then transported to the beverage container recycling facility for further processing.

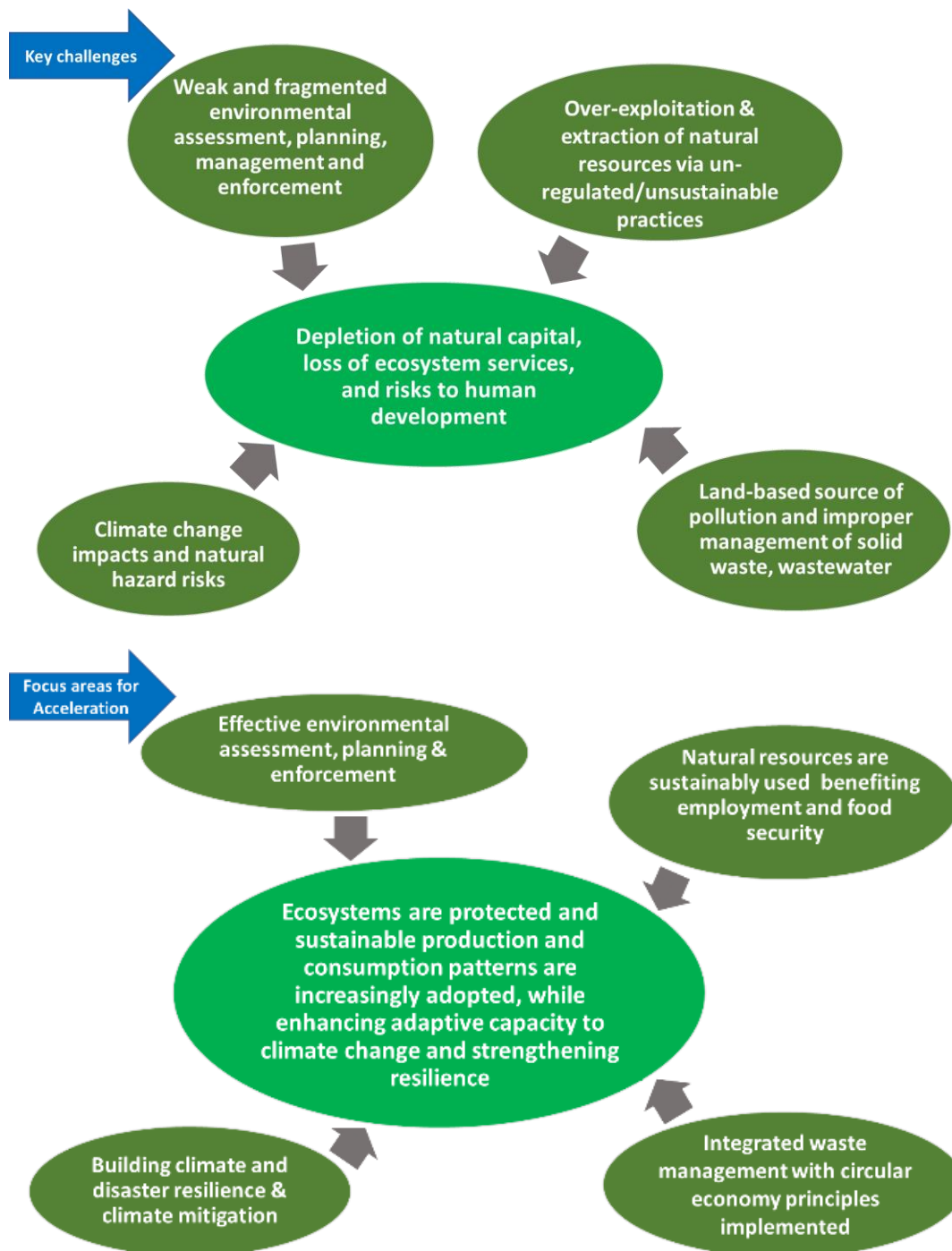
Experience suggests that awareness-raising and public education are a key component of circular economy strategies. To this end, SWMCOL actively promotes recycling and runs awareness-raising campaigns that target schools, business entities and communities to promote best practices in waste prevention, reduction and recycling. One programme is dedicated to recycling in the public sector, so that the government is seen to be leading by example.

References: Solid Waste Management Company Ltd., Trinidad and Tobago, <https://swmcol.co.tt/>; UNEP, SIDS Waste Management Outlook (2019).

Improvements may also be required at facilities for storage of inorganic waste and to services for its collection and transport to regional waste management centres. In this regard, the systems analysis prepared for this report has identified as a key issue the need for the adequate resourcing of island councils, so that they can provide basic services, including waste management. This is linked to the broader question of effective decentralization, including a clear definition of roles and functions in relation to waste management. Issues related to decentralization are covered in more depth in the “Peace” section below.

Figure 6: Planet – Key development challenges and focus areas for acceleration

⁹⁶ United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Mangroves for the Future (MFF) (2019). Study of Nationally Recognized Good Practices of Waste Management Case-study of AA.Ukulhas and B.Maalhos, p. 30.



As outlined in the figures above, the environmental challenges described thus far result in depletion of natural capital, loss of ecosystem services and consequent risks to human development. The depletion of natural capital and weakened ecosystems, especially coral reefs, renders the islands less resilient in the face of climate impacts. Degradation of the marine environment due to inadequate management of solid and liquid waste not only damages the natural environment but also affects human wellbeing, as it diminishes economic activities, especially tourism and development of the blue economy. This illustrates the linkages and interactions between the Planet and Prosperity pillar, which are further explored elsewhere in this report.

Prosperity

Maldives economy is highly vulnerable to external shocks. This vulnerability arises from its small size but also significant dependence on enclave-type, tourism-led growth. The “One island, One resort” model of tourism development has been effective in driving high economic growth, but it has generated few connections with the local economy and provided limited employment opportunities for the local population.⁹⁷ While complete, accurate data is unavailable, information on employment in tourist resorts indicate that locals represent 48 percent of total employees of which only 3 percent are Maldivian women.⁹⁸

Tourism-related revenue has been redistributed through the expansion of social services and subsidies as well as public administration and infrastructure. These tourism-related investments have contributed to an improvement in socio-economic indicators over time but have similarly exacerbated dependence on tourism and thus increased economic vulnerability: tourism represents 26 percent of GDP (though the indirect contribution through associated sectors is higher), 80 percent of exports and 40 percent of government revenue.⁹⁹

The demand and supply sides of Maldives’ labour market is mismatched, with the school-to-work transition becoming increasingly difficult for young Maldivians who either lack the high skills demanded at one end of the spectrum or do not aspire to those available at the other, such as low-skill occupations in the construction and agriculture sectors. Analysis by the World Bank suggests that the mismatch exists at all skill levels and age groups. For high-skill occupations, 44 percent of women and 62 percent of men are unqualified. It is worth noting that the skill gap is larger for men than women for all age groups.¹⁰⁰ Several factors explain this mismatch. One concerns low educational attainment: only 5 percent of the population (15 years old and above) have completed upper secondary education and 68 percent of youth (19 years old or younger) dropout before completing higher secondary education, undermining their chances for taking up higher-qualified jobs.¹⁰¹ Another factor relates to the high reservation wage among young Maldivians, many of whom aspire to a job in the public sector, the largest employer in the country (representing 39 percent of the employed population).¹⁰²

To address the qualification issue, the Government of Maldives recently launched programmes focused on expanding opportunities for higher secondary education across the atolls and to improve access to a first degree both in-country and overseas through government financing schemes. The government has also worked towards expanding opportunities for TVET at regional schools. A national apprenticeship programme for youth was launched in 2021 in cooperation with state-owned enterprises, private companies and training institutions to build professional competencies among youth and ease the transition to employment. According to feedback from employers, efforts are also necessary in building soft skills, such as communication skills, work ethics and commitment, customer service, among others, to enhance employability.¹⁰³

Low labour force participation by women prevents Maldives from making full use of the country’s talent. Maldivian women are often well qualified: the completion rate for higher secondary education is higher for young women than men and the number of women with a vocational certificate or

⁹⁷ World Bank (2020). Maldives Systematic Country Diagnostic Update, Report number: 157675-MV, p.5.

⁹⁸ Maldives Bureau of Statistics (2019). Employment in Tourists Resorts 2019, p. 8.

⁹⁹ World Bank (2020). Maldives Systematic Country Diagnostic Update, Report number: 157675-MV.

¹⁰⁰ World Bank (2020). Maldives Systematic Country Diagnostic Update, Report number: 157675-MV, p. 14.

¹⁰¹ Maldives Bureau of Statistics (2019). Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2019. Population.

¹⁰² Maldives Bureau of Statistics (2018). Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2016. Employment Update.

¹⁰³ Ministry of Higher Education (2019). Environmental and Social Management Framework. Enhancing Employability through Human Capital and Entrepreneurship Development Project, March 2019, p. 9.

diploma is higher than men.¹⁰⁴ However, women's labour force participation is lower than men by 31 percent, according to the Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2019. Social norms concerning the roles of women limit their participation in the economy and more broadly in society. This is particularly the case with employment in tourism resorts due to the negative perception among young women and their families of life in resort islands. Women take up a larger share of household responsibilities than men, spending three times more than their male counterparts on unpaid household and care work.¹⁰⁵ Due to these responsibilities, women are disproportionately represented in the informal economy, accounting for more than 40 percent, mostly as self-employed or contributing family workers.

Maldives is highly dependent on imports, including on strategic items, such as food and fuel. Maldives is a net food importing country, similarly to other small island developing states. The country imports 95 percent of the food it consumes.¹⁰⁶ Dependence on imports creates vulnerabilities to world market conditions, including price variations and trade disruptions of the sort seen in the context of the COVID-19 crisis which created alarm in Maldives. In addition to import dependence, however, the country's geography poses logistical and economic challenges for the distribution and storage of food across dispersed inhabited islands. Import and distribution of staple foods (e.g., wheat, flour, sugar) is undertaken centrally by the State Trading Organization which buys at international prices and sells at government-controlled prices with the difference absorbed by the public budget.

Agriculture is mostly limited to subsistence crops with certain agricultural islands producing at a commercial scale. The Government of Maldives has prioritized the development of commercial scale agriculture in the Strategic Action Plan. A state-owned enterprise, the Agro National Corporation (AgroNat), was established to drive development of the agriculture sector. The objectives of AgroNat are to support food security, promote import substitution and improve livelihood opportunities for the local population, especially women.¹⁰⁷ Its services aim to facilitate market access to farmers at a fixed price which is hoped will provide incentives to expand production for commercial purposes. AgroNat also works to strengthen the value chain, facilitating the connection across market players and tackling logistical challenges associated with geography and supporting production capacity to allow wholesale and retailers, including resorts, to buy local production. AgroNat is targeting 45 islands for the development of commercial agriculture using contract farming as the preferred modality to engage producers.¹⁰⁸ As AgroNat only started operations in 2020 during the pandemic, it is too early to assess the results of the strategy. Nevertheless, development of the agriculture sector is constrained by extremely limited arable land and water, both of which are affected by climate change, increasing urbanization and pollution, which deteriorate the quality of soil and water and reduce even further the land available for agriculture.

Maldives relies almost exclusively on imports of fossil fuels to meet its energy demand which makes the country vulnerable to the volatility of the global oil market. Fuel imports similarly weigh heavily on the economy and public finances, accounting for 10 percent of GDP.¹⁰⁹ The public budget subsidizes the price of energy to utilities through transfers to the State Trading Organization which imports oil at international prices and sells at a loss, as well as the price of electricity through transfers to utilities which sell electricity to end consumers at government-controlled prices.

¹⁰⁴ Maldives Bureau of Statistics (2019). Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2019. Population.

¹⁰⁵ Maldives Bureau of Statistics (2019). Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2019. Employment.

¹⁰⁶ Ministry of Health (2017). National Food Safety Policy (2017-2026). Maldives Food and Drug Authority, No: Policy/23-MoH/2017/02, p. 6.

¹⁰⁷ <https://agronational.mv/en/about>.

¹⁰⁸ <https://corporatemaldives.com/haroon-rasheed-managing-director-of-agro-national-corporation/>.

¹⁰⁹ Asian Development Bank (2020). A brighter future for Maldives powered by renewables. Roadmap for the Energy Sector 2020-2030, November 2020, p. xiii.

Both the food and electricity subsidies are indirect and general in nature (i.e., not targeted to those in need). The Ministry of Finance has made suggestions for reducing the cost of these subsidies to the national budget, including through better targeting, but changes have not been introduced.¹¹⁰ The government has adopted an SDG Roadmap for the energy sector¹¹¹ which promotes both energy efficiency measures and expansion of renewable energies. Transitioning to affordable and renewable energy is a priority for the Government of Maldives, which set itself the target of reaching net-zero by 2030 provided adequate support and assistance from the international community is made available. Meeting the ambitious energy targets could also help ease the financial burden of energy on the national budget. It will require mobilizing private investment and creating the right incentives. In this context, the government may want to consider shifting financial assistance to households to facilitate access to electricity sourced from renewable energy and incentivize lower consumption.

The association between economic growth and imports in Maldives has created large current account deficits (CAD). The CAD averaged 25 percent of GDP between 2016 and 2019.¹¹² The financing of CADs adds an element of vulnerability to Maldives to the extent that these require borrowing either in the local or international financial markets, or both, adding to public debt. This is the case in the country where the CAD has been covered by foreign direct investment, though concentrated in the tourism sector and debt. Maldives' public debt is projected to remain above 100 percent of GDP over the medium term.¹¹³

Maldives' economy and livelihoods are largely dependent on the country's biological resources. Both are vulnerable to the impact of climate change and current trends in the management of natural resources. An assessment of the economic value of biodiversity for Maldives estimated it contributed 71 percent to employment, 98 percent to exports and 89 percent to GDP.¹¹⁴ This is not surprising since Maldives' two main economic sectors – tourism and fisheries – depend on natural resources for their viability. Tourism drives growth and fisheries provide foreign revenue through exports and is critical for livelihood and food security in atolls. Agriculture is also important for livelihood and food security and a key government priority; the sector similarly depends on natural resources especially land and water, both of which are scarce in Maldives.

The Government of Maldives have identified economic diversification and the development of the blue economy as key priorities. Economic diversification should contribute to reducing dependence on and associated vulnerability to fluctuations in high-end tourism, but also to shift towards a more sustainable economic model that provides opportunities to the local population and helps build resilience. The current scope of economic diversification efforts under the blue economy are still largely anchored on traditional sectors, such as tourism, fisheries and agriculture, and, more importantly, lack an overarching framework or strategy defining a collective understanding and vision for the blue economy in Maldives and relevant institutional mechanisms to ensure it develops in a coherent, whole of government and society manner.

Articulating the policy and institutional framework for the development of the blue economy would be important to support economic diversification efforts. This should involve: accurately valuing marine resources and ecosystem services provided by the oceans to better factor these into decision-making; introducing integrated planning and management of relevant activities in the ocean to better

¹¹⁰ Ministry of Finance (2020). Medium-Term Fiscal Strategy 2021-2023, 31 July 2020, p. 43.

¹¹¹ Asian Development Bank (November 2020). A brighter Future for Maldives Powered by Renewables. Roadmap for the Energy Sector 2020-2030.

¹¹² Maldives Monetary Authority. Key economic indicators available at: www.mma.gov.mv/#/statistics.

¹¹³ Ministry of Finance (2021). Medium Term Fiscal Strategy 2022-2024, 31 July 2021, p. 40.

¹¹⁴ Emerton L., Baig S. and Saleem M. (2009) Valuing Biodiversity. The economic case for biodiversity conservation in the Maldives. AEC Project, Ministry of Housing, Transport and Environment, Government of Maldives and UNDP Maldives, p. xii.

assess cumulative impacts; and anticipating and developing human resources, among others. Such a holistic approach can contribute to addressing some of those vulnerabilities and challenges for prosperity in Maldives outlined above. The Government of Maldives recently launched an initiative with the Blue Prosperity Coalition to result in the formulation of a Maldives Marine Spatial Planning and designation of protected areas. This initiative can be the anchor for a more structured and encompassing initiative on the blue economy in Maldives.

Box 11: What is the “blue economy”?

Interest in the “blue economy” is relatively recent and can be traced back to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2012. The Conference launched a concerted effort by the international community to better integrate environmental sustainability considerations in socio-economic progress. As evidenced by the 2017 Ocean Conference, awareness is increasing of the impact of human activity on marine resources and oceans and how these are undermining the ocean’s ability to provide ecosystem functions and services, compounded by the climate change emergency. This has further motivated the articulation of the blue economy concept and, more importantly, concrete initiatives towards operationalizing it. The Small Island Developing States (SIDS), such as Maldives, have led these efforts, considering the defining role that oceans and marine life and ecosystems play for these countries and how affected they are by global warming and climate change.

Blue economy refers to a concept that seeks to promote economic growth, social inclusion and preservation or improvement of livelihoods while at the same time ensuring environmental sustainability (World Bank and United Nations, 2017). Central to the blue economy approach is the de-coupling of economic development from the degradation of marine and other aquatic environment and ecosystems, underscoring the need to properly value those ecosystems and the services they provide for integrating their true value in all aspects of economic activity and development planning and implementation, across sectors, including infrastructure development, trade, shipping, tourism, travel, energy production, among others.

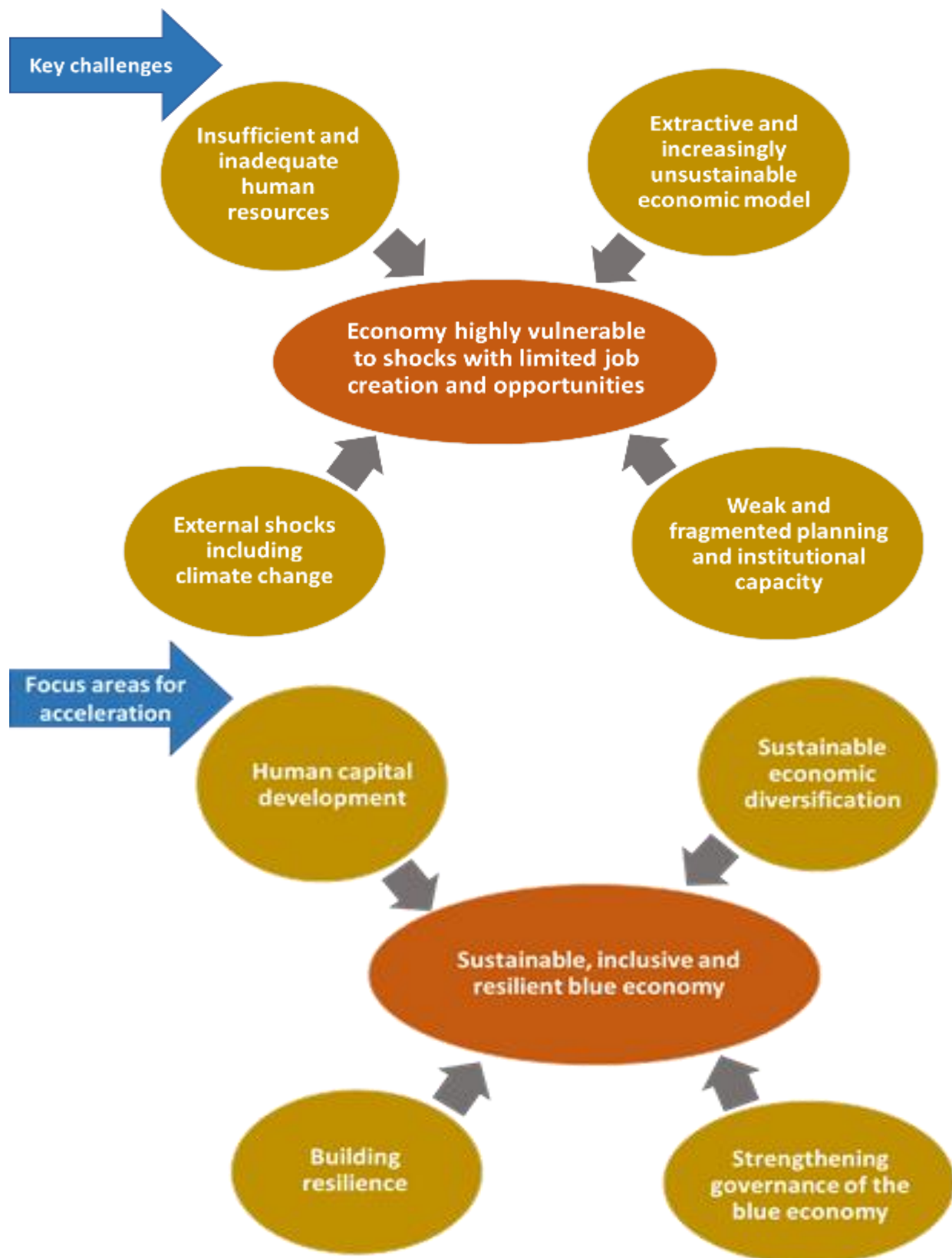
The articulation of a blue economy approach requires overcoming policy and institutional barriers, in particular the legacy of single-sector management and limited engagement of concerned stakeholders. According to the United Nations Environment Programme, this lack of integrated approach has led to the degradation of 60 percent of the world’s major marine ecosystems (UNEP, 2011).

The blue economy approach is embedded in SDG 14 – Life Below Water – which seeks to conserve and sustainably use the ocean, sea and marine resources for sustainable development.

References: UNDP (2018); UNEP (2011); World Bank and UNDESA (2017); General Assembly Resolution 312 of 6 July 2017, A/RES/71/312, annex, “Our ocean, our future: call for action.”

The figure below summarizes the key development challenges and focus areas for acceleration, as summarized above.

Figure 3: Prosperity – Development challenges and focus areas for acceleration



Box 12: Developing the blue economy – Barbados’ experience

Barbados initiated national discussions about grounding their development strategy around the concept of the blue economy in 2012 following the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (also known as Rio+20). At this point, small island developing states started changing

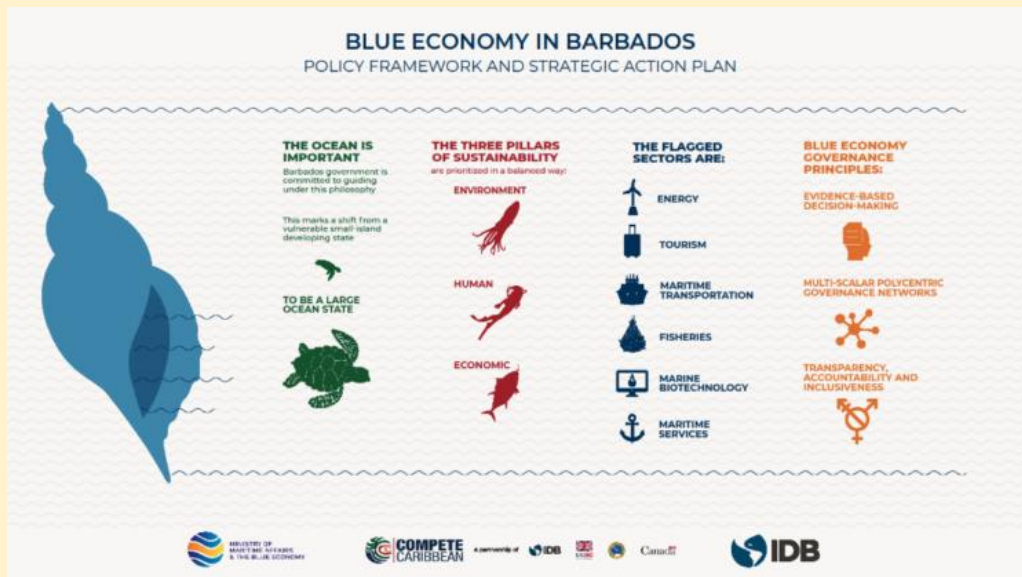
the narrative from identifying themselves through their vulnerabilities as small islands to placing greater emphasis on their strengths as large ocean states with valuable marine resources.

Barbados understood the value of a sustainable blue economy as critical in building a climate resilient economy and defined the purpose of the blue economy as maximizing access to and use of the marine resources that fall under its jurisdiction, such that this becomes a significant contributor to the national economy, without jeopardizing the health of the ecosystems that make up the marine environment.

The country prioritized comprehensive, robust and consistent analyses about future scenarios and policy options to sustain sustainable growth from the ocean space and defined an overarching and holistic framework for the sustainable management of marine resources that considers the implications of current activities on the oceans and helps to realize future potential opportunities.

The main components of the country's holistic framework are outlined in the figure below. These include a commitment towards an approach that reconciles economic, human and social and environmental sustainability and identification of priority sectors for development, including energy and marine biotechnology in addition to more traditional sectors such as fisheries, tourism and shipping. Finally, the framework defines a governance mechanism that involves multi-stakeholder approaches and transparency and accountability. The approach considers avenues for financing the development of the blue economy, including through innovative financing instruments.

Barbados assigned responsibility for the development of the blue economy to a dedicated Ministry of Maritime Affairs and the Blue Economy. The Ministry holds an overview of the entire blue economy, promoting development activities in cooperation with a broad range of stakeholders in the public and private sector.



References: [https://blogs.iadb.org/sostenibilidad/en/a-blue-roadmap-for-barbados/#:~:text=Barbados%20is%20striving%20as%20a,implement%20a%20Blue%20Economy%20Roadmap](https://blogs.iadb.org/sostenibilidad/en/a-blue-roadmap-for-barbados/#:~:text=Barbados%20is%20striving%20as%20a,implement%20a%20Blue%20Economy%20Roadmap;); UNDP (2020). Barbados Blue Economy Scoping Study. Synthesis Report, UNDP and the University of West Indies.

Peace and good governance

Maldives is a young democracy whose institutions need to evolve and be strengthened to consolidate the democratic transition. The 2008 Constitution of Maldives marked a turning point with the past by establishing multi-party democracy with universal suffrage, new institutions at central and local level and independent institutions and branches of the Executive, Legislature and Judiciary for the first time in the history of the country. The new set of values and rules embedded in the Constitution were not fully internalized by political actors and Maldivian society, leading to political confrontation and crises in the decade that followed.¹¹⁵ The judiciary in particular, was unable to assume the role foreseen in the Constitution, lacking the experience, training and understanding to function in a polity governed by the rule of law and guide newly established institutions through the required transition to constitutional democracy.¹¹⁶ Different factors, such as inconsistencies and gaps in the legislative framework and capacity constraints in the state institutions and judiciary itself, affected by allegations of corruption and political influence, undermine access and quality of justice and the consolidation of democracy in the country.

While Maldives has made justice reform a priority, as reflected in the Strategic Action Plan, the concrete measures taken so far have highlighted challenges stemming from the judiciary's vulnerability to influence, varying degrees of capacities in terms of judicial training and experience among other factors.¹¹⁷ Supplementing legislation, strengthening checks and balances and ensuring gender equity are among key steps required to meet the targets of successful reforms. Measures taken have included: the Judicial Service Commission increasing transparency and providing equal opportunity to new candidates to compete for positions as judges; amendments to the Judges Act that enhance rules of conduct and establish mandatory asset declaration for judges; revamped provisions for disciplinary procedures for judges; a full appraisal of judges undertaken by the Judicial Service Commission to inform improvements in the qualification of judges; among other measures.¹¹⁸

Vital to restoring confidence is ensuring accountability for past abuses and violations of human rights. In this context, an important step was taken with the adoption of the Transitional Justice Act in 2020 and the establishment of the office of the Ombudsperson for Transitional Justice which has the potential to reflect on past events, enable truth-seeking, investigate and acknowledge past violations by the state and individuals in power, end the culture of impunity, strengthen the rule of law and improve accountability mechanisms.¹¹⁹ Due to underlying political and social tensions, including the perennial challenge of Presidential term limits, full implementation of the reforms as per the Constitution have faltered across different administrations. If justice reforms are to take root, strategic communication between all stakeholders are necessary to ensure long-term commitment, which is critical to building the trust of citizens in a democratic system.

Corruption undermines confidence in state institutions and democratic participation. According to the Global Corruption Barometer Asia 2020, 90 percent of those participating in the survey think government corruption is a big problem in Maldives. The perception of corruption across different state institutions varies, however, with parliament members (50 percent), judges and magistrates (44 percent), business executives (44 percent), government officials (38 percent) and local government

¹¹⁵ United Nations Maldives (December 2020). Common Country Analysis, p. 4.

¹¹⁶ UNDP (August 2019). Assessment of the Justice Sector Reform proposals, Final Report, p. 5.

¹¹⁷ The challenges in the justice sector have been covered in a number of reports prepared by international experts including e.g., Gabriela Knaul, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers, Addendum: Mission to Maldives, 21 May 2013. United Nations Human Rights Council, A/HRC/23/43/Add.3; Jason Gluck and Johann Kriegler, Assessment of the Justice Sector Reform Proposals, Final Report, August 2019.

¹¹⁸ Statement by Lauza Ali, Counsellor Permanent Mission of Republic of Maldives to the United Nations at the Sixth Committee on Agenda Item 85: The Rule of Law at the National and International Levels, GA76/6C-2/21, p. 2.

¹¹⁹ United Nations Maldives (2021). United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for Maldives 2022-2026, 26 April 2021, p. 17-18.

officials (37 percent) perceived by survey participants as most corrupt.¹²⁰ The current government has made fighting corruption a priority and the situation has improved as compared to 2019, judging by the Transparency International's corruption perception index (CPI) for Maldives, though it remains fragile.¹²¹ While the legal framework has improved, gaps remain in enhancing transparency and accountability, strengthening of oversight bodies and protecting civic space to create an enabling environment, such as freedom of journalists and civil society to monitor and report on corruption and hold institutions accountable, including in the private sector.¹²²

Youth are particularly affected by corruption which they perceive as a major barrier to accessing opportunities. An assessment of youth vulnerabilities in Maldives carried out in 2019, put corruption as the first concern of youth, followed by jobs, and both are closely linked. Corruption and state capture by a small group, mostly in the capital, is perceived as systematically excluding the large majority from opportunities. For instance, political connections are seen as essential to land a job in government, the country's main employer, as opposed to qualifications or abilities.¹²³ The global corruption barometer Asia 2020 similarly notes the impact of corruption in access to essential services, with 15 percent of survey respondents indicating using connections for accessing public services. 11 percent did so to access public schools and 10 percent said they did so for accessing public clinics and health centres, as well as to obtain identity documents.¹²⁴

Giving a voice to citizens and creating opportunities to participate in policy and decision-making are an integral part of state accountability. The Strategic Action Plan acknowledges both the importance of state accountability to citizens as enshrined in the 2008 Constitution and the lack of a culture and capacity of state institutions, from Parliament to different government entities, to respond to citizen demands in this respect. In this context, the Strategic Action Plan defined an ambitious agenda to strengthen the oversight role of Parliament and enhance transparency in the functioning of the state, providing for freedom of expression and media and strengthening mechanisms towards citizen participation in policy and decision-making.

The Defamation Act enacted by the previous government was repealed in 2018, improving the legal framework for freedom of expression and the media. A Presidential Commission on Investigation of Murders and Disappearances was established by the government and preliminary findings issued in 2019. A Whistleblower Protection Act was also enacted in 2019 to protect journalists and other actors when denouncing corruption and other wrongdoings in state and other institutions. Similarly, a new Association Bill defines an improved framework for the participation of civil society organizations at all levels of public life. These initiatives have resulted in an improved legal framework for transparency, accountability and protection for non-state actors in Maldives, but it will not be enough by itself in addressing the weaknesses identified. These efforts need to be accompanied by strong political will and commitment to conclude investigations and prosecutions through capacity building, allocation of resources to promote effective implementation and measures to guarantee the full independence of relevant authorities to ensure adherence to domestic and international standards.¹²⁵ This remains a

¹²⁰ Transparency International (2020). Citizens' views and experiences of Corruption. Global Corruption Barometer Asia 2020, Transparency International, p. 45.

¹²¹ www.worlddata.info/asia/maldives/corruption.php.

¹²² <https://edition.mv/macl/21777>.

¹²³ UNDP (2019). Youth Vulnerability in the Maldives, National Counter Terrorism Center and UNDP, February 2019, p. 15.

¹²⁴ Transparency International (2020). Citizens' views and experiences of Corruption. Global Corruption Barometer Asia 2020, Transparency International, p. 45.

¹²⁵ Human Rights Council (2020). National report submitted in accordance with paragraph 5 of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 16/21, Maldives, Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, A/HRC/WG.6/36/MDV/1, 14 February 2022, p. 15.

challenge for Maldives, as has been noted recently with the unsatisfactory resolution of outstanding high profile disappearances and assassinations.¹²⁶

Decentralization opens opportunities to enhance good governance and close accountability gaps by bringing decision-making closer to citizens. Decentralization is enshrined in the 2008 Constitution and the Decentralization Act of 2010 which formalized political decentralization in Maldives by establishing the election of local councils. The Act defines the objectives of decentralization in Maldives “to allow the island communities to make their own decisions in a democratic and accountable manner; to improve people’s living standards through social, economic and cultural development; to empower the people; to increase scope for bringing the services closer to the people; and to create an environment conducive for peace and prosperity.”

The Decentralization Act defines the powers of island and city councils and gives them broad development responsibilities. The island and city councils are responsible for formulating development plans in consultation with the community (See Box 13 for an example of community participation in sustainable development planning in Brazil),¹²⁷ implementing and monitoring development projects in their islands and cities and formulating island level policies necessary to discharge their responsibilities. Atoll councils have a subsidiary function to the island councils, providing support to development planning and monitoring and evaluating development programmes managed by the island councils, among others.

Box 13: Social participation in sustainable development planning: Experiences from the Municipality of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

The Municipality of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in cooperation with the Undersecretariat for Planning and Monitoring Results, launched a programme in 2018 to promote citizen participation in the formulation of the Sustainable Development and Climate Action Plan which defines key parameters for the future of the city over the next 30 years. As the projects included not only improvements to the city's infrastructure, but improvements also for the people who live there, citizens were encouraged to participate. Participatory activities were undertaken to deepen understanding, review definitions pointing to specific needs, engage and involve participants, stimulate citizenship and improve effectiveness in policies and planning. Decentralization of the process sought to share responsibilities as well as difficulties and together to find strategies and new paths for creating a better city.

Understanding the challenge of reaching different profiles in such a large and multifaceted city, different strategies were created to connect with citizens, including: training workshops; an online platform with different participation surveys and specific content for children and young people (participa.rio); face-to-face meetings with innovative dynamics; and projects with the municipal education network to learn the children's point of view. All of this was possible thanks to key partnerships, such as with UN-Habitat, C40 network, UFRJ, the Municipal Secretariat of Education and MultiRio.

Training workshops held with UN-Habitat in 2019 addressed Open Government themes and involved municipal technicians and staff from partner institutions, representing an important driver of the participation process, as the trainees also contributed proposals for the Plan. In a specific workshop for the municipal education network, a competition was launched to name a character known as "the children's friend" that would disseminate information on sustainable development. This contest

¹²⁶ Maldives Journalist Association (2021). Chasing Justice Maldives: Study on Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists, p. 17. Available at: https://samsn.ifj.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Maldives_LR_A4_2021-final.pdf.

¹²⁷ In the case of the City Council, the development plan is formulated by the central government in consultation with the City Council and its residents.

boosted many school activities. The Plan reached the schools intertwined with SDG dissemination activities. This helped parents, staff, local representatives and students to understand and value sustainable development of their city.

Also in 2019, face-to-face meetings were held involving institutions, leaders, civil society, youth, adults and the elderly, helping the Plan to be democratically built with popular engagement. Even children were directly involved in proposing actions for the city.

The digital platform plays an important role in this process, as all results achieved are posted online and city residents are able to follow the Plan's implementation.

Reference: <https://oidp.net/distinction/en/>.

Decentralization was intended to enhance access to quality services and opportunities across the country, however, a 2015 Amendment was a setback. Improvements were expected to result from the broad development mandate assigned to the local councils, their ability to raise funds to finance development programmes and the services to be provided to communities (see Box 14). Despite the provisions of the Decentralization Act, however, the devolution of functions from the central government to local councils has been gradual and inconsistent over time.¹²⁸ As such, the years after 2012 saw a reversal of legislatively authorized functions from the local councils back to the central government, undermining the structure to provide services to island communities.¹²⁹ An Amendment to the Decentralization Act in 2015 stated that public services provided by city councils to local communities would be determined by the President. The adoption of the Amendment was followed by presidential decrees reducing the powers and public services under the responsibilities of city councils.¹³⁰ With the city councils covering the most populated areas of the country, including the capital, presidential actions to restrict their powers represented strong reversals to the decentralization process in the country.

Box 14: Municipal services under the responsibility of the island councils, according to the Decentralization Act of 2010

The Decentralization Act of 2010 is explicit about the services falling under the responsibility of the island (and city) councils and they span the full spectrum from economic, social, environmental and administrative services to bring state institutions closer to citizens. Below is a select list of services included in the Act.

- Provide primary health care and other basic health security services.
- Provide pre-school education and organize and conduct educational and vocational programmes to train adults.
- Run a centre to provide social security services, take measures to stop domestic violence and provide victims of such violence with security and assistance and put in place a system to help senior citizens and people with special needs.
- Dispose waste at the island level.
- Take measures to alleviate land erosion.
- Control pests.
- Establish a system that provides assistance in the event of an emergency.

¹²⁸ Transparency Maldives (2019). Review of the Decentralization Framework in the Maldives, Transparency Maldives, p.19.

¹²⁹ Zulfa, Mariyam (2019). Decentralized Administration in the Maldives. A critical examination of 'decentralization' as a constitutionally enabled governance structure for the Maldives. Why did it fail at first instance? What is the way forward?, ResearchGate, pp. 17-18.

¹³⁰ Transparency Maldives (2019). Review of the Decentralization Framework in the Maldives, Transparency Maldives, p.36.

- Build and maintain roads.
- Maintain the jetty, build and maintain the wharf and operate the ferry terminal.
- Provide and maintain public facilities, such as water, electricity and sewage.
- Maintain social centres, playgrounds and sport facilities.
- Allocate land and register land and buildings.
- Manage the birth and death registry, gather and maintain statistical records and maintain a registry of foreigners living on the island.

Reference: Decentralization Act.

Renewed impetus for decentralization is creating avenues for tackling inequalities and sharing prosperity, but efforts are required to address challenges to decentralization. The current government has prioritized decentralized governance, outlining a comprehensive agenda in the Strategic Action Plan. This includes the establishment of five regional urban centres to concentrate infrastructure and resources in order to facilitate more cost-effective service delivery.

An important amendment to the Decentralization Act was brought forward in 2019. The Amendment articulated provisions already foreseen in the Act concerning fiscal decentralization and established a local council grant equivalent to 5 percent of government revenue and 40 percent of land rents (e.g., including shores, reefs and lagoons).¹³¹ The Amendment similarly gave control to local councils of 100 percent of revenue generated from resources in their jurisdiction, as well as Public Sector Investment Programmes below MVR5 million, as sectoral grants. The Amendment enhanced gender inclusiveness of local councils by reserving 33 percent of local council seats for women and extended the term of local councils from three to five years.¹³²

Further, the changes allow citizens to elect mayors of cities and presidents of atoll and island councils, all of whom were previously selected from among local council members.¹³³ These reforms touch on critical concerns associated with the ability of local councils to discharge their mandate by enhancing financing, participation and accountability, but they are not exhaustive nor do they go far enough in dealing with challenges to decentralization that have been identified.¹³⁴ These include, for instance: interpretation of legal provisions concerning the Decentralization Act and other pieces of legislation such as the Land Act and the Public Finance Act; the scope of devolution of responsibilities from the central government to the local councils and associated coordination issues between different levels of government; and the capacity development needs of key actors in decentralized governance in Maldives, including local council and Women Development Committees' members. These issues were raised in the context of the MAPS engagement consultations and would require attention to realize the potential of decentralization for advancing equitable development in Maldives.

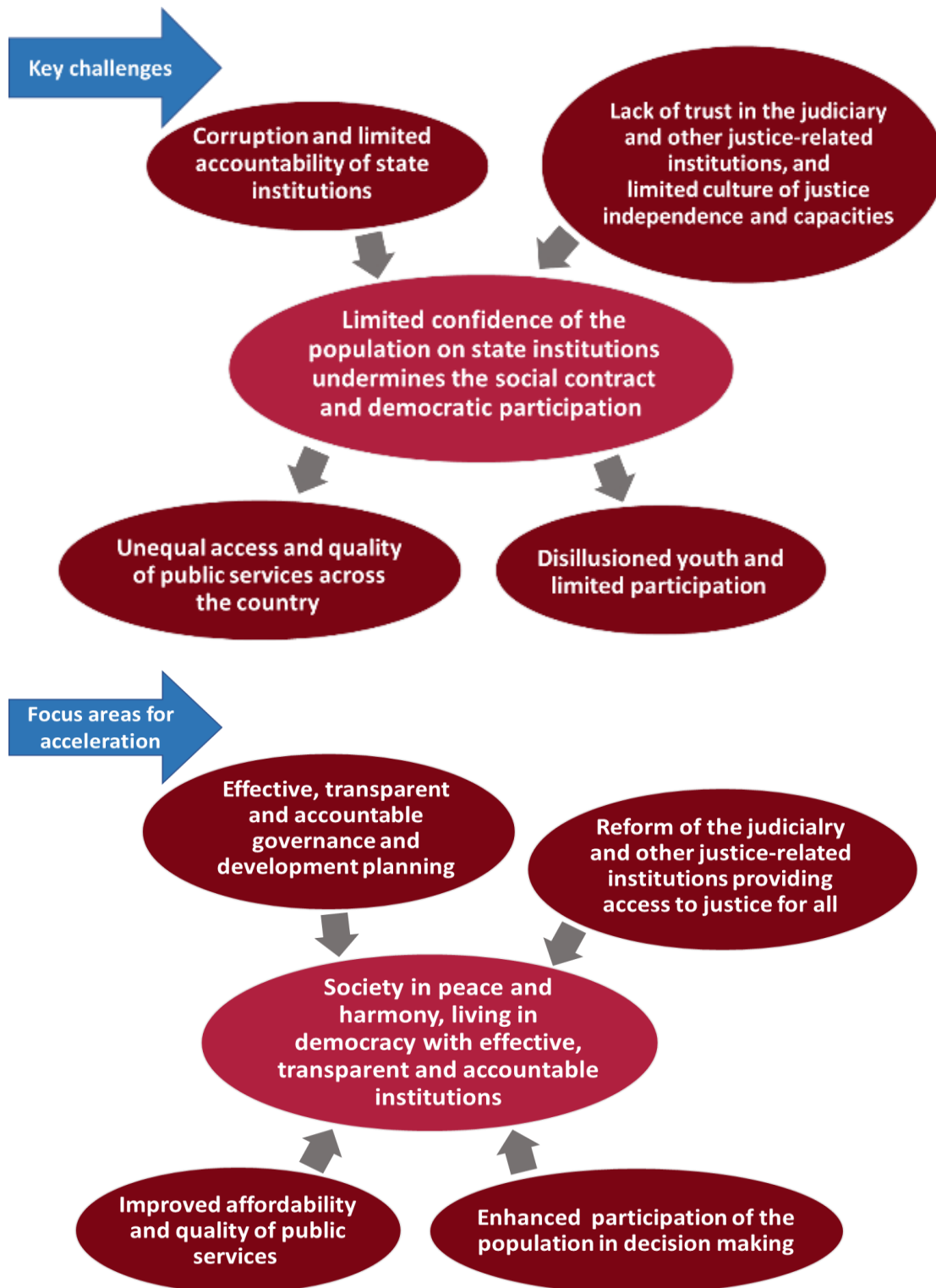
¹³¹ Ministry of Finance (2021). Medium Term Fiscal Strategy 2022-2024, p. 36.

¹³² <https://avas.mv/en/74879>.

¹³³ <https://maldivesindependent.com/politics/landmark-changes-ratified-to-decentralisation-law-149641>.

¹³⁴ See Transparency Maldives (2019). Review of the Decentralization Framework in the Maldives, Transparency Maldives and UNICEF (2013). Study on the Decentralization Process in the Maldives with reference to the impact on services to children, UNICEF.

Figure 7: Peace and good governance: Key development challenges and focus areas for acceleration



System diagrams and survey results

This section discusses the system diagrams for each of the national priorities — economic diversification, building resilience and decentralization — together with insights from the survey results. The diagrams identify potential leverage points that can contribute to changing the system’s behaviour. The diagrams’ nodes or components are colour-coded according to the Strategic Action Plan, highlighting the relationship between intervention points in the system and this main national policy document. Relevant SDG targets to which each leverage point is associated are also indicated. The SDG targets point towards which change will be desirable to advance sustainable development. In the system diagram analysis that follows, reference is made to the relevant SDG targets when discussing the leverage points and other system nodes.

A complete mapping of system nodes to SDG targets, indicators and pillars and targets of the Strategic Action Plan is found in excel sheets in Annex 5 A through C. The analysis used a mapping of the Strategic Action Plan to the SDGs undertaken in 2020.¹³⁵

The diagrams and narrative behind them are available in an interactive format at the links provided below. These allow readers to zoom in and out on segments of the diagram and its components (nodes), facilitating a better understanding of the linkages across them. These diagrams are made available to promote further engagement among stakeholders around the systems and possible programmes and initiatives that could help drive change over time towards a condition closer to stakeholders’ expectations of the system.

[Economic Diversification System Map](#)

[Building Resilience System Map](#)

[Decentralization System Map](#)

[Economic Diversification Presentation](#)

[Building Resilience Presentation](#)

[Decentralization Presentation](#)

Economic diversification

Economic diversification has been identified as a priority in the Strategic Action Plan and can help reverse the overwhelming dependence of Maldives on the tourism industry. Figure 8 shows the economic diversification system diagram and the linkages to the other systems selected for analysis. The diagram shows the economic sectors driving growth in Maldives, such as tourism and construction, as well as sectors at the core of the economic diversification efforts, such as commercial agriculture and fisheries, at the centre. The diagram makes evident the connections towards building resilience through both the pathway of influence from economic activities to the health of the environment, as well as through the pathway of livelihood and employment opportunities and the level of community participation in decision-making which are closely associated with the decentralization process.

¹³⁵ See UNDP (2020). Mapping the Strategic Action Plan (2019-2023) of the Maldives with the Sustainable Development Goals: Key findings report, UNDP Maldives.

Figure 8: System diagram — economic diversification

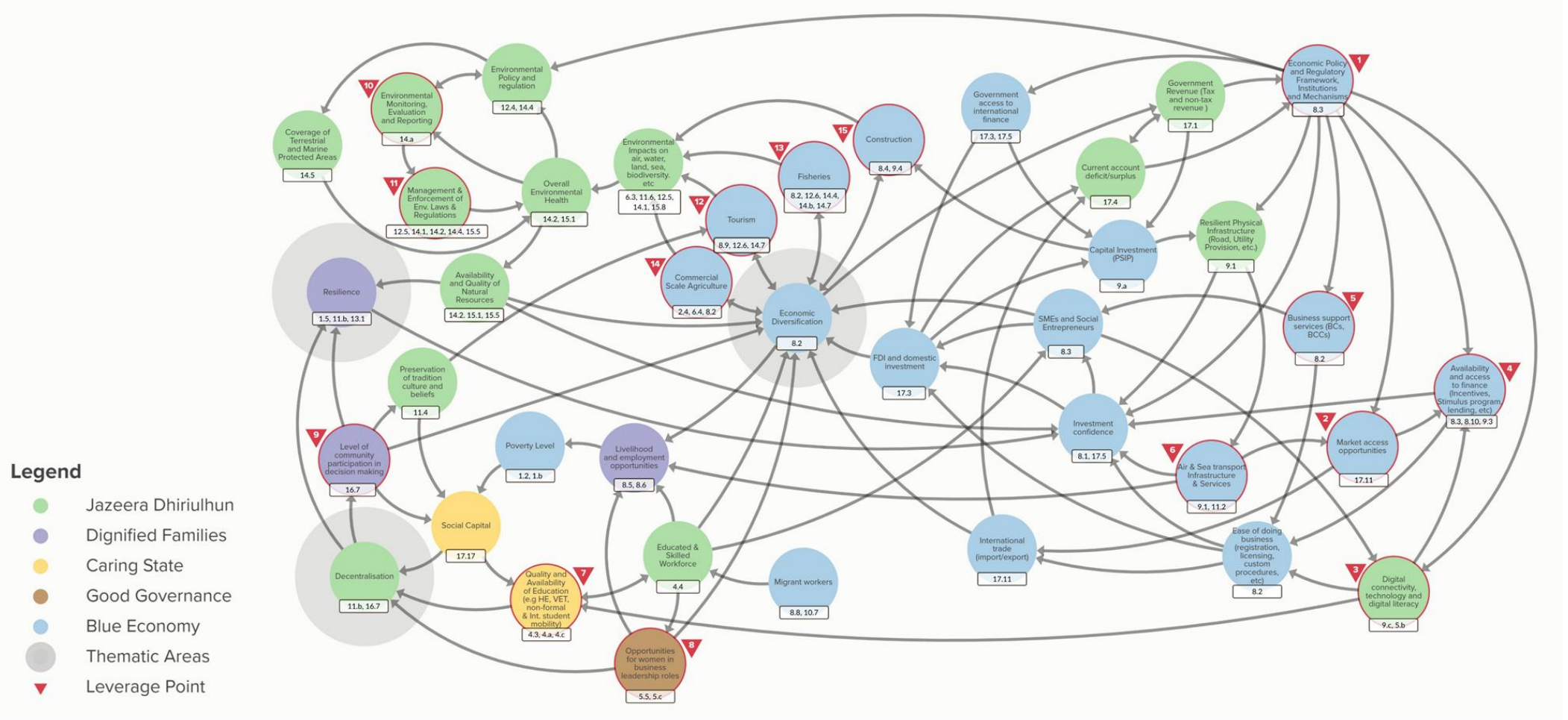
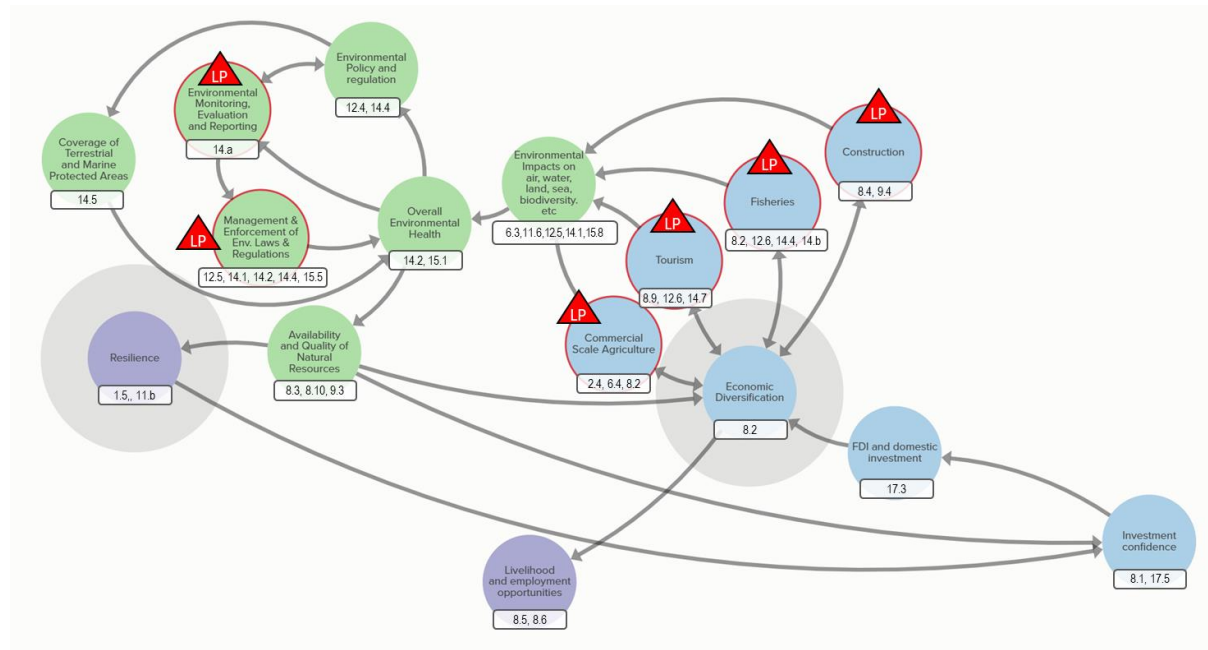


Figure 9 below looks at the economic diversification sub-system of sustainable management and protection of environmental capital. The diagram identifies influence pathways from the key economic sectors to the environment, with impacts on water, land and biodiversity, among others, affecting overall environmental health and, with this, the long-term availability and quality of natural resources upon which the economy, livelihoods and society depend, affecting resilience.

Figure 9: System diagram on economic diversification — Sustainable management and protection of Environmental capital



During consultations for the MAPS engagement, reference was made by national stakeholders to weaknesses in the management and enforcement capacity of environmental legislation and overall stewardship of the natural environment. The quality, reliability and transparency around Environmental Impact Assessments, including notably in the tourism industry, was also raised. These comments were echoed by survey responses. 33 percent of respondents indicated that a top challenge for economic diversification is poor environmental protection on the part of the business sector due to weak regulations and enforcement. Furthermore, 47 percent of respondents indicated that sustainable fishery management, technologies and practices need to be strengthened and 51 percent suggested that central government and island councils need to work together better to implement an efficient system for island level waste management.

Actions in each of these sectors to mitigate or avoid environmental impacts, as well as make improvements in environmental management, monitoring and reporting capacity, can address current weakness in the system with positive implications for long-term sustainability (used as leverage points to change the system).

The government has introduced a number of measures to improve the sustainability of the tourism industry, including shifting oversight for Environmental Impact Assessments back to the Environmental Protection Agency with a view to enhance independence, quality and transparency around the studies and introducing a points system to better vet the quality of investment proposals, including financial and environmental sustainability, shifting incentives toward environmental

protection (e.g. losing points for land reclamation).¹³⁶ A coherent and holistic approach for improving capacity on environmental management and monitoring, as identified in the Planet pillar, will go a long way towards supporting economic growth in a manner that preserves the very environment on which it depends.

Intervening in the tourism industry as a leverage point is associated with SDG 8.2 and would require devising and implementing policies to promote sustainable tourism that create jobs and promote local culture and products by 2030.

As outlined in the sub-section on the Planet pillar, waste management is an issue of increasing concern in Maldives because solid waste has significantly increased with population growth, shifting consumption patterns associated with urbanization and the increase in tourist arrivals. Going forward, it will be important to ensure that economic diversification proceeds hand-in-hand with circular economy approaches, which reduce the amount of waste produced in the first place and can stimulate new and innovative business models as part of a diversified economy. One example would be waste-to-energy programmes that recover waste for energy generation. Such mechanisms are in line with SDG 12.6 which encourage companies, especially large and transnational companies, to adopt sustainable practices.

Another issue of critical importance is the impact of agricultural production on water resources. particularly because water scarcity is already a major challenge in Maldives, further exacerbated by climate change. The quality and quantity of fresh water can be affected by poor agriculture practices, such as the use of dug wells as fertilizer mixing containers which causes leaching of fertilizers into freshwater resources, undermining quality and availability. Unsustainable extraction of groundwater for small-scale agriculture on islands, similarly, affects long-term water availability and quality. These issues require the adoption of new technologies and awareness raising and capacity development of farming communities on good agriculture practices and water efficiency and conservation in agriculture.¹³⁷

The Government of Maldives is working with partners to address some of these issues which will need to be at the centre of efforts to expand agriculture production in the country. Intervening through the agriculture sector as a leverage point has the potential to contribute to advancing SDG2.4 if efforts focus on supporting sustainable food production systems and implementing resilient agricultural practices that: increase productivity and production; help maintain ecosystems; strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters; and progressively improve land and soil quality. Similarly, policies leveraging technology towards more sustainable and resilient food systems can contribute to SGD 8.2 aimed at achieving higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, including through a focus on high value added and labour-intensive sectors.

Fisheries store potential for economic diversification, employment and food security. An analysis of export competitiveness shows the strength of Maldives in the manufacture of food products, mainly fish.¹³⁸ However, space exists for diversification of species, including through the expansion of aquaculture, and for increasing value added in line with government strategies highlighted in the Strategic Action Plan and other policy documents. These efforts need to go hand in hand with strong research and analysis of stock sizes and sustainable catch capacity and enforcement of environmental

¹³⁶

www.devex.com/news/how-corruption-tourism-environmental-sustainability-play-out-in-paradise-97678.

¹³⁷

www.ctc-n.org/system/files/response_plans/Project%20concept%20note_Maldives_AF-2021000038_all%20signed.pdf.

¹³⁸ United Nations Maldives. From vulnerabilities to opportunities. Economic diversification in the Maldives, p. 7.

regulations, as well as initiatives to establish linkages with the tourism industry and niche international markets to ensure financial and commercial sustainability.^{139,140} Intervening in the fisheries industry as a leverage point towards sustainable economic diversification has the potential to contribute to several SDG targets, including SDG 8.2 on achieving higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, including through a focus on high-value added and labour-intensive sectors and SDG 14.4 on regulating harvesting and ending overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and destructive fishing practices and implementing science-based management plans, in order to restore fish stocks in the shortest time feasible, at least to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield as determined by their biological characteristics.

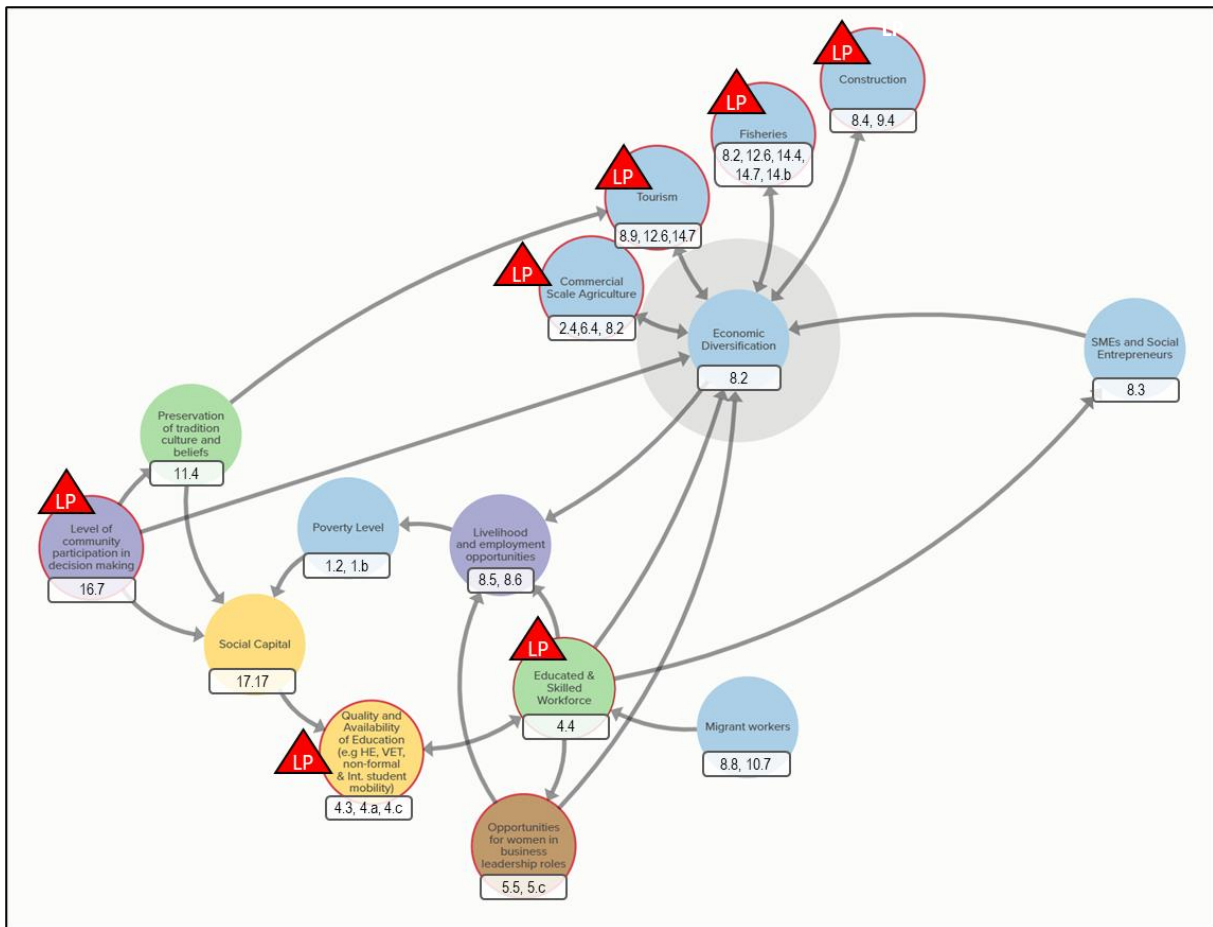
Economic diversification can contribute to addressing the inclusion gap in the current economic development trajectory of Maldives. The diversification of growth drivers can contribute to generate livelihood and employment opportunities, especially for youth and women who are especially vulnerable in the Maldivian context, overrepresented as they are in unemployment and informal economic activities. But this will not happen automatically. As discussed above, there is a need to enhance the quality and relevance of education and better prepare the local population to match with their skills and aspirations to the opportunities to be created in the market, whether in tourism or new sectors, developed as part of economic diversification efforts. Correspondingly, a skilled labour force makes feasible options for economic diversification. 45 percent of survey respondents identified the skill mismatch as a major barrier to economic diversification.

Figure 10 shows the economic diversification diagram sub-system on human resource capacity and community participation, which identifies the pathways of influence from the economic sectors driving growth and economic diversification to livelihood and employment opportunities. The diagram makes explicit that the connection is not direct but mediated by the availability of quality education for the local population and opportunities for women in business and leadership roles to mobilize local talent (both leverage points for system change), including through social enterprises and small- and medium-sized enterprises in atolls and towards sustainable development more broadly.

Figure 10: System diagram on economic diversification — Human resource capacity and community participation

¹³⁹ World Bank (2020). Maldives Systematic Country Diagnostic Update, Report number: 157675-MV, p. 18.

¹⁴⁰ Ministry of Fisheries, Marine Resources and Agriculture (2019). National Fisheries and Agricultural Policy 2019-2029, MFMRA and FAO, July 2019, p. 9.



The diagram shows that migrant workers add to the pool of skilled labour in Maldives: migrants not only work in tourism, construction and agriculture, but also in health and education where they contribute to delivering quality social services to the population. In this context, policies to manage migration are important in attempts to support sustainable economic diversification and these should be aligned to SDG 8.8 which targets protecting labour rights and promoting safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, and SDG 10.7 on facilitating orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies.

During consultations for the SDG Roadmap, stakeholders mentioned the lack of effective tripartite mechanisms for social dialogue bringing government, businesses and workers together to address the problems of labour market and skills mismatch and more broadly working towards better outcomes concerning social inclusion in the country. This type of mechanism can enhance community participation in decision-making, a leverage point in the economic diversification system that advances SDG 16.7 on responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels.

Box 15: The National Economic Development and Labour Council — a South African institutionalized tripartite social dialogue mechanism

The National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC) in South Africa is a representative and consensus-seeking statutory body established by law through the National Economic

Development and Labour Council Act of 1994. NEDLAC facilitates sustainable economic growth, greater social equity at the workplace and in communities and increases participation by all major stakeholders in economic decision-making at national, company and shopfloor level.

NEDLAC consists of representatives from government, organized labour, organized business and community organizations. NEDLAC seeks to cooperate through problem-solving and negotiation on economic, labour and development issues and related challenges facing the country. NEDLAC considers all proposed labour legislation before it is introduced into Parliament and all significant changes to social and economic policy before it is implemented or, in the case of legislation, before it is introduced into Parliament. NEDLAC's highest decision-making body is the Executive Council which is formed by representatives of all constituent groups. The Executive Council is supported by a Management Committee which oversees and coordinates the work of NEDLAC.

Issues tabled at NEDLAC are referred to one of four NEDLAC Chambers for negotiation or consultation. These are:

- the Development Chamber, which seeks to reach consensus and conclude agreements on matters pertaining to social and economic policy, urban and rural implementation strategies and developmental programmes;
- the Labour Market Chamber, which considers all proposed legislation relating to labour market policy;
- the Public Finance and Monetary Policy Chamber, which considers and engages on policy and legislation pertaining to financial, fiscal, monetary and exchange rate policies, the coordination of fiscal and monetary policy, the related elements of macroeconomic policy and the associated institutions of delivery; and,
- the Trade and Industry Chamber, which seeks to reach consensus and make agreements on matters pertaining to the economic and social dimensions of trade, as well as industrial, mining, agricultural and services policies and the associated institutions of delivery.

Issues of a cross-cutting nature are dealt with by special committees or task teams. Policy proposals and legislation for consideration by NEDLAC are generally tabled by the government. In addition, labour, business and community constituencies can also table issues. The core work programme of NEDLAC is largely determined by the policy and legislative matters that the government tables for engagement.

Since its inception, the different NEDLAC Chambers have been consulted on a wide range of draft legislation (e.g., Acts, Bills, Codes of Good Practice), including in the areas of labour relations, social policy, education, health, trade and environment. Issues are referred to NEDLAC for consideration and engagement. NEDLAC conducts an engagement process on the issue tabled with its members and prepares a report outlining areas of agreement and disagreement. The NEDLAC report is sent to the relevant minister and subsequently tabled in Parliament. On an annual basis, NEDLAC is given the opportunity to brief relevant parliamentary Portfolio Committees on NEDLAC reports. This practice tends to be consensus building and therefore offers a consensus solution.

A dynamic local private sector is necessary for economic diversification that contributes to inclusion and sustainable prosperity. Overall, the private sector is weak in Maldives. The public sector through the public administration and state-owned enterprises plays an important role in the economy from employment creation to contribution to GDP and provision of services (i.e., utilities, education, etc.). In addition, economic opportunities are concentrated in Malé or surrounding areas leading to internal migration towards the capital city where close to one third of the population lives. Promoting a more dynamic private sector will be important for spreading economic opportunities across the atolls,

helping address spatial inequalities in the country and diversifying government revenue sources. It can also contribute to innovation and technological improvements and thus, more broadly, competitiveness.

The small- and medium-sized enterprise (SME) sector is critical in this respect in Maldives. The Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2019 indicates that 40,232 SMEs exist in the country, 85 percent are own account workers and 10 percent are employers, with 62 percent of them based in atolls. The sector represents 26 percent of total employment in Maldives, with local Maldivians representing 86 percent of the people engaged in these enterprises. Further, 28 percent of the small- and medium-sized entrepreneurs are young and 52 percent of these enterprises are owned by women. Almost two-thirds of small- and medium-sized entrepreneurs (58 percent) have no certificate of educational attainment; 15 percent have a technical/vocational certificate or diploma; and 9 percent have completed a bachelors' degree or above.¹⁴¹

Lack of economic opportunities, especially for women and youth, emerged as a priority concern of stakeholders during consultations and survey responses across all themes. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on economic activity further underscored the need for financing and other support schemes for enterprises, especially SMEs in the formal and informal economy.

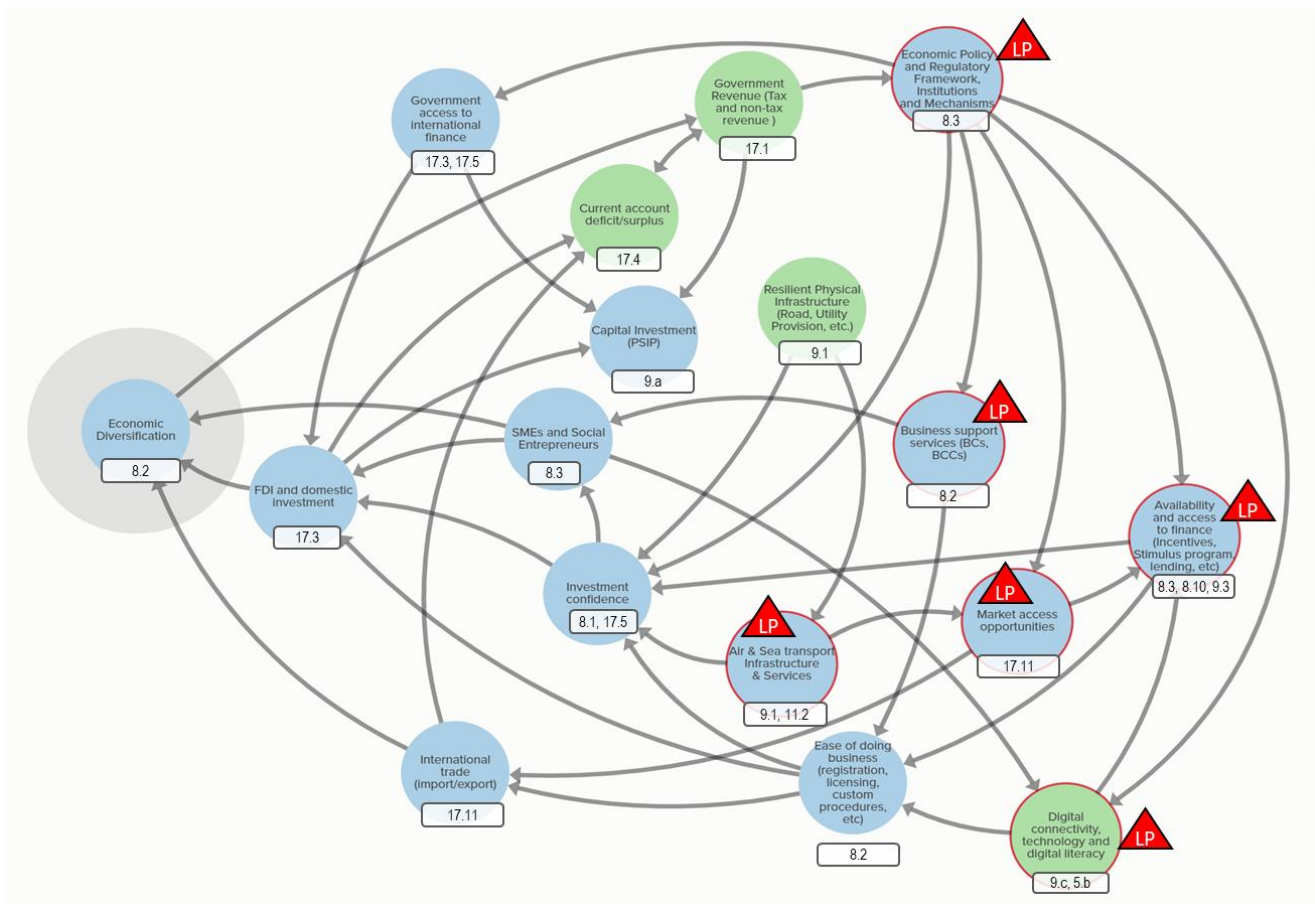
Maldives has emphasized the development of the SME sector, including by enhancing opportunities in some of the traditional economic growth drivers, such as tourism and fisheries, and these initiatives can be expanded to other sectors through wider diversification efforts around the use of digital technologies and the blue economy (e.g., renewable energy, waste management, etc.).

Figure 11 shows the economic diversification diagram sub-system on SME support services, trade and investment and the components or nodes in the system that allow the private sector to thrive. Many important nodes, such as finance, other support services and infrastructure for SMEs, are very weak or non-existent in Maldives, though it varies across the islands. The difficulties faced by SMEs in accessing finance (58 percent) and lack of business support services and infrastructure (47 percent) came out as the top challenges for economic diversification noted by survey respondents. 49 percent thought that outreach and business support services to SMEs by the Business Center Corporation should be improved.

Moreover, the policy and regulatory environment has many shortcomings, including: an absence of widespread awareness and use of a common definition of SMEs; virtually non-existent targeted data collection on SMEs; and ad-hoc SME policy coordination among government agencies. During consultations for the MAPS engagement, reference was made to the importance of promoting not only SMEs but also social enterprises as their business model is better aligned and responds to the needs of the communities in which they are anchored.

Figure 11: System diagram on economic diversification — Small- and medium-sized enterprise support services, trade and investment

¹⁴¹ Maldives Bureau of Statistics (2019). Household Income and Expenditures Survey 2019. Small Business.



In line with the Strategic Action Plan, several initiatives have been launched to promote and support the development of SMEs. These initiatives are important, but they are very recent and remain inadequate in scope, coverage and scale compared to what is needed across the atolls. For instance, the Business Center Corporation has identified a set of focus areas for support to SMEs, including facilitating access to finance, technical assistance and advisory services, trade facilitation, markets access and outreach. Some of these services are still at inception phase while others are operational but at a small scale. This is the case with the 11 Business Centers established across various atolls. These Centers provide advice and information on business procedures and processes to entrepreneurs.¹⁴²

Concerning access to finance, the SME Finance Development Corporation (SDFC) was established in 2019 to address this important gap in the ecosystem for SMEs. The SDFC targets finance to five sectors: local tourism, agriculture, manufacturing, information communications technology and fisheries and specific loan mechanisms were activated to respond to the needs of SMEs in the face of the COVID-19 crisis.¹⁴³ Accelerating and bringing these initiatives to scale is important going forward, as well as expanding the remit of services provided with a strong emphasis on the adoption of digital technologies and tools at the enterprise level, for example.

Support services to SMEs and availability and access to finance are identified as leverage points in the economic diversification system. Intervening in these nodes has the potential to move forward on several SDG targets, including SDG 8.3 on policies that promote productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, including through access to financial services

¹⁴² www.bcc.mv/.

¹⁴³ <https://mfr.mv/banking/sdfc-the-backbone-of-smes>.

and SDG 9.3 targeted at increasing the access of small-scale industrial and other enterprises to financial services, including affordable credit and their integration into value chains and markets.

In addition, other actions are necessary, such as improving the business environment and facilitating market access both at local and national level, including resorts, and at international level, such as niche markets for fisheries. Addressing quality issues and stepping up marketing would be necessary. For market access to materialize, transport and, more broadly, connectivity is critical and are both marked as leverage points in the system for intervention.¹⁴⁴ These leverage points would contribute to SDG 9.1 which aims at developing quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including regional and trans-border infrastructure, to support economic development and human well-being, with a focus on affordable and equitable access for all.

The system diagram similarly underscores the importance of digital connectivity, technology and literacy as an enabler for private sector development and other sustainable development areas (e.g., education, healthcare, etc.). While Maldives is well placed vis-à-vis peers in South Asia concerning digital connectivity through international cable deployment and smart phone penetration, for example, gaps remain: only 35.6 percent of the population has access to 4G compatible speeds and 10 percent has fixed broadband penetration.¹⁴⁵ Large disparities across the country also exist: 83 percent of households in Malé have access to fixed broadband services, whereas only 51 percent of households in atolls do. Education and digital literacy and skills may act as a barrier to the uptake of digital technologies: available data show that the Maldivian population with more than secondary education are three times more likely to use the internet compared to those with no education.¹⁴⁶

Moreover, among those employed in the ICT sector in the country, only 22 percent are women, pointing to a significant gender gap. The high cost of digital connectivity came across in consultations with national stakeholders and survey responses. Analysis by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the World Bank suggests that the cost of reliable and high speed fixed broadband connection, necessary for quality internet, is higher in Maldives than in other small island developing states and other countries in South Asia.¹⁴⁷ While telecommunication enterprises reduced costs in the face of the COVID-19 crisis following demands by the national government, more structural long-term solutions are necessary. In this context, and even though Maldives launched 5G-based services in 2020, the regulatory framework has not kept pace with technological evolutions. According to the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) tracker, the Maldives regulatory framework is assessed as second generation, suggesting that there is space for adjustments.¹⁴⁸ Analysis by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) similarly notes Maldives gaps concerning the regulatory framework for electronic transactions, cyber security and data privacy, among others.¹⁴⁹

The Government of Maldives identified the development of the ICT sector as a priority in the Strategic Action Plan, involving improvements in the governance and legal framework for the sector, as well as its uptake across government and by the private sector. Concrete initiatives have been undertaken to improve electronic payments (needed for ecommerce transactions) and facilitate access to and interaction with government services and entities. Given the cross-cutting impact of digital technologies – with positive repercussions on health, education, disaster risk reduction and key

¹⁴⁴ It is worth noting that as illustrated in the system diagram, transport is also critical to accessing job opportunities and thus connects to inclusion.

¹⁴⁵ Maldives Digital Connectivity Brief, A4A1, <https://1e8q3q16vyc81g8l3h3md6q5f5e-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Maldives-Brief.pdf>

¹⁴⁶ World Bank (April 2021). Maldives Development Update. A Digital Dawn, p. 32.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ ITU (2019). Small island developing states (SIDS) and ICT. Mid-term review of the Samoa Pathway, Thematic reports.

¹⁴⁹ <https://unctad.org/topic/ecommerce-and-digital-economy/ecommerce-law-reform/summary-adoption-e-commerce-legislation-worldwide>.

economic sectors, such as tourism, fisheries, agriculture, etc. – a strong case exists for deepening and accelerating efforts and investments in this area. The importance of digital technologies is underscored by SDG 9.c which calls for support to developing countries to increase access to information and communications technology and SDG 5.b on supporting the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women.

Building resilience

As noted above, resilience can be defined as the ability of a system to prevent, resist, absorb, adapt, respond and recover positively, efficiently and effectively when faced with a wide range of risks, shocks and disruptions. Resilience underpins the long-term sustainable development of Maldives. And while resilience is often considered through an environmental lens, this analysis adopts a broad and multi-pronged approach, recognizing that the resilience of Maldives is influenced by a combination of environmental, economic and social factors.

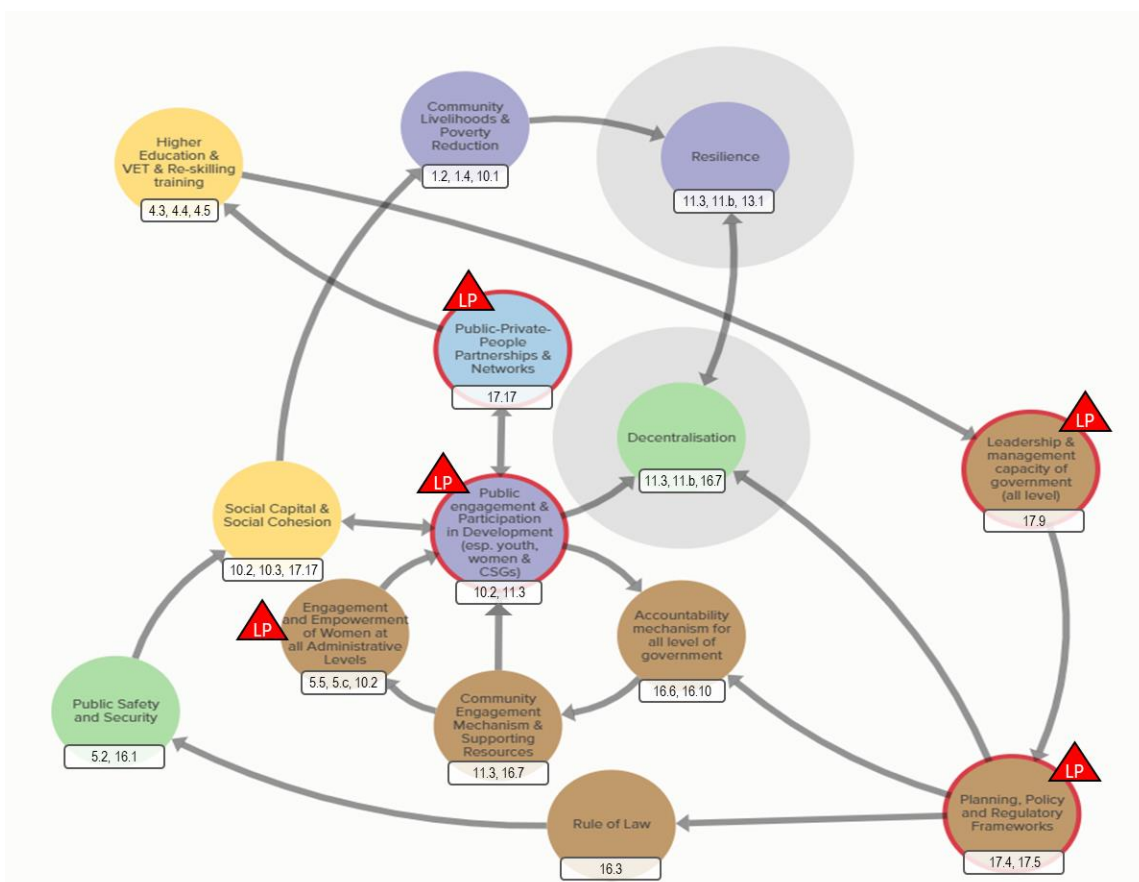
Building the resilience of Maldives demands the protection and effective management of marine and terrestrial ecosystems, biodiversity and natural resources, which are the basis for wellbeing and economic activity for the country. Tourism – whether in its current form or more diversified – is a key sector of the economy and is reliant on well-managed ecosystems. Healthy ecosystems can help buffer the impacts of environmental change, contributing to resilience.

Empowered communities and strengthened governance, including through effective decentralization, can contribute to resilience in the face of economic and environmental shocks.

Figure 12 outlines the system diagram on building resilience, showing its linkages with other systems selected for analysis – economic diversification and decentralization. For example, the diagram indicates how economic diversification, through promoting community livelihoods and poverty reduction, enhances resilience. The influence of the availability and quality of natural resources on resilience is also clearly mapped, including in relation to freshwater. Moreover, the system map uncovers the key influence on the resilience system of leadership and management capacity, planning and regulatory frameworks and environmental management and enforcement. For Maldives, building resilience entails not simply the provision of goods and services, such as improved infrastructure, better social services and upgraded inter-island transportation (all of which are important and identified in the system map), but also the broader governance capacity to plan, prioritize and deliver such public goods and services. The governance, accountability and community participation sub-system (see Figure 13) further explores these relationships.

The diagram below (Figure 13) highlights the pathways for enhancing integrated planning, evidence-based policymaking, transparency and accountability. Importantly, public engagement and participation in local development decisions is identified as a leverage point for building resilience in the country because it highlights the active involvement of local communities in decisions that affect their day-to-day lives. Institutionally, the leverage point stresses the importance of a sound and effective decentralization process and contributes to advancing SDG 10.2 that targets empowerment and the promotion of social, economic and political inclusion of all and SDG 11.3 on inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries.

Figure 13: System diagram on building resilience – Governance, accountability and community participation



The nodes in the governance, accountability and community participation sub-system also serve to highlight the social dimension of resilience, shown by the importance of building social capital and cohesion for strengthening economic livelihoods and community resilience building. Similarly, the sub-system points to the role of public-private partnerships in higher education opportunities and skills development for youth and adults, leading to strengthened leadership capacity which has the potential to feed back to better policy, planning and regulatory framework building and implementation. Public-private partnerships and networks are therefore identified as a leverage point and, through its pathway of influence through the system, this leverage point can contribute to several SDGs on education, such as SDG 4.3 on equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university, SDG 4.4 aimed at increasing the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship and SDG 4.5 which focuses on eliminating gender disparities in education and ensuring equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for

the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations. The analysis in relation to the prosperity pillar of the SDGs and the economic diversification national priority identifies the need for vocational and job-readiness skills.

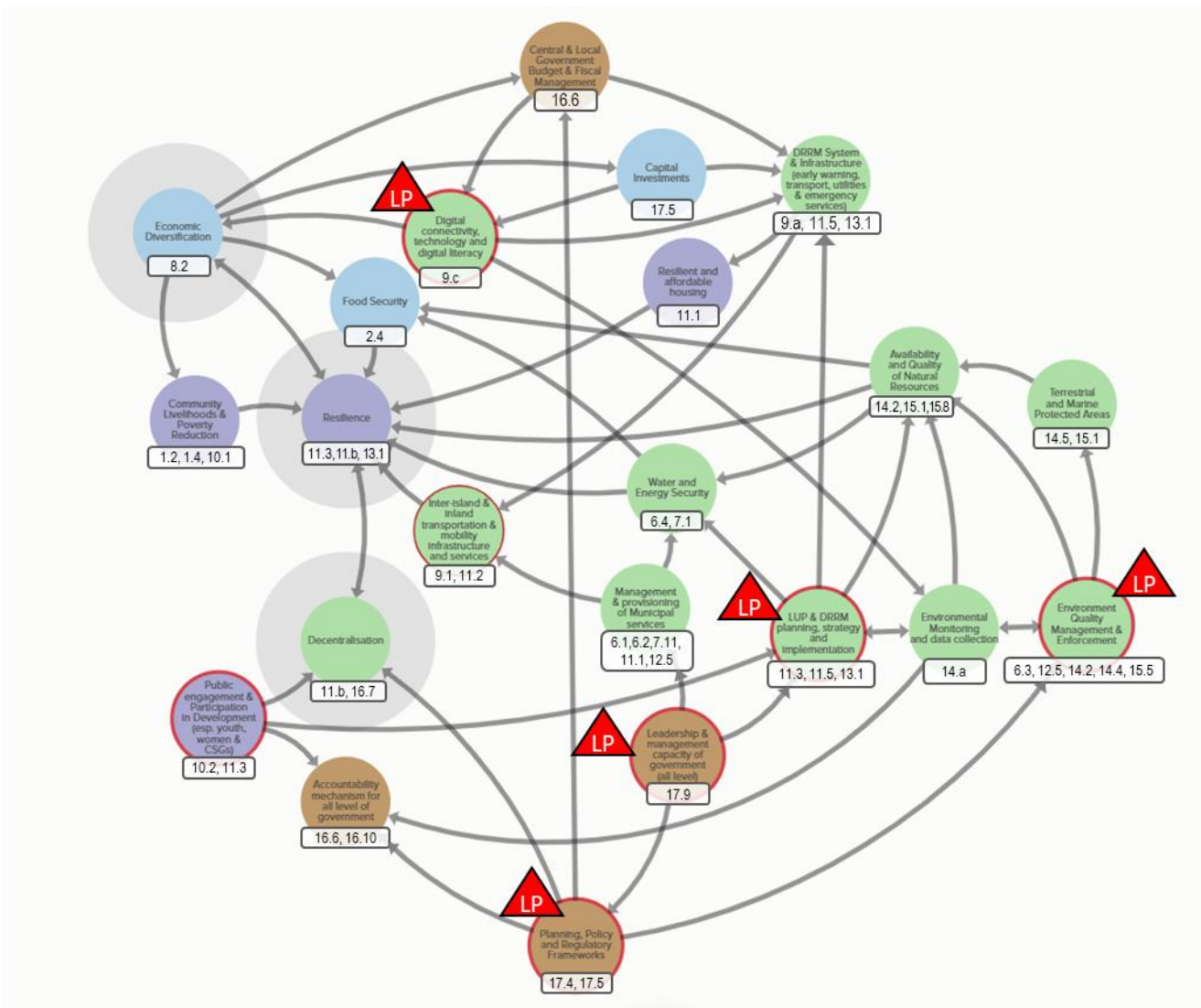
Figure 14 below shows another sub-system of building resilience, focusing on disaster risk reduction, resilient infrastructure and sustainable environmental management components and pathways. And indeed, the development of critical infrastructure across the country, especially in the islands farther away from the capital, is essential to spread access to services and economic opportunities. During the consultations for the MAPS engagement, however, concern was expressed about uncontrolled land reclamations and an over-emphasis on “hard” infrastructure like harbours and airports. The development of infrastructure should be assessed against the possibility of creating new vulnerabilities, for instance through damage to protective ecosystems, or further undermining locations that are vulnerable to storms and rising sea levels. Additionally, with limited human and economic resources, the capacity to maintain and adequately staff installations must also be a concern, with the consequence that consideration could be given to a model based on cooperation and resource-sharing among islands. As one of the respondents to the survey put it: “...not a dysfunctional hospital or an airport on every island, but one shared community hospital with exceptionally good service.”

Construction through land reclamation programmes for tourism and infrastructure development has implications for resilience in Maldives. The rapid expansion of tourism on uninhabited and artificial islands, as well as basic infrastructure, such as harbours, to improve transport and overall connectivity across the country has a strong impact on the environment and the long-term viability of the tourism industry and the blue economy more broadly. A nationwide analysis of the impact of human activity on the environment in Maldives focused specifically on the shoreline and reefs shows significant reef-island morphological change and impacts on their capacity to provide coastal protection services to island communities, to various degrees across the islands.¹⁵⁰ This points to an urgent need to enhance monitoring capacity of the impact of development projects on the natural environment and consideration needs to be made of alternative adaptation strategies at island level, depending on the current status and projected evolution. This similarly underscores the importance of island community and leadership involvement and capacity on climate change adaptation and disaster risk management, as impacts will be diverse due to varying climates and also due to islands choosing different development trajectories.

The system analysis identified inter-island and inland transportation and mobility infrastructure and services as a system node. Interventions around this node will contribute to advancing SDG 9.1 if the focus remains on infrastructure that is of quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient to support economic development and human well-being and is affordable and accessible for all.

Figure 14: System diagram on building resilience – Disaster risk reduction management, resilient infrastructure and sustainable environmental management

¹⁵⁰ Duvat, Virginie E. K. and Alexandre K. Magnan (2019). Rapid human-driven undermining of atoll island capacity to adjust to ocean climate-related pressures, *Sci Rep* 9, 15129.

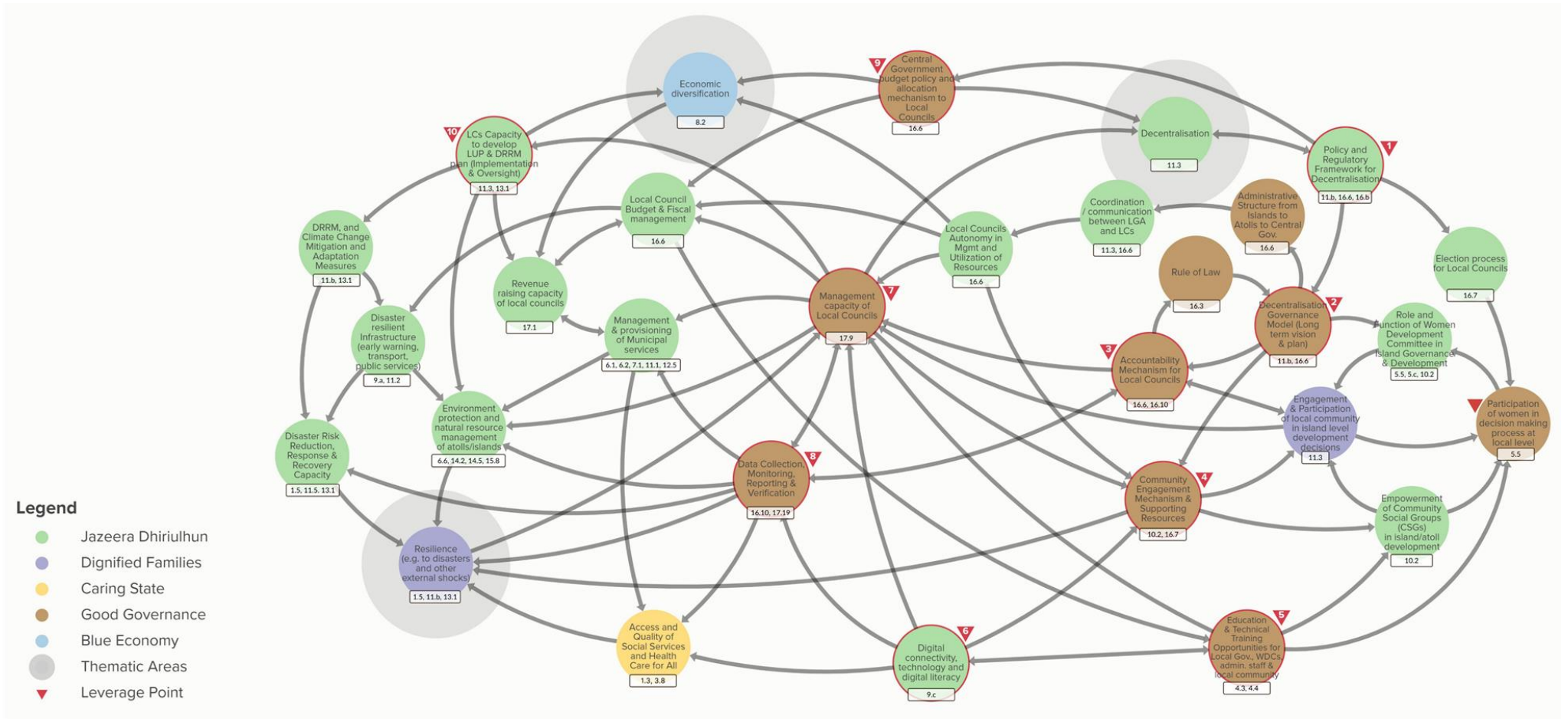


The survey identified top challenges for building resilience, among them were insecure livelihoods and unemployment, dependency on imports for food and commodities, weak governance and rule of law, insufficient social support systems, overuse of natural resources and lack of environmental protection. These are consistent with the system analysis.

Decentralization

Deepening the decentralization process in Maldives opens opportunities for addressing some of the key emerging concerns in the country, such as inequality which has a strong spatial component in the country. Figure 15 shows the decentralization system diagram and pathways of influence to the economic diversification and building resilience systems selected for the analysis. The diagram also shows the components identified as leverage points. The management capacity of local councils, for instance, is at the core of the system’s ability to turn the aspirations concerning decentralization into concrete results in terms of improved development outcomes for the population across the country.

Figure 15: Decentralization system diagram



Greater participation in decision-making by the community and the accountability of officials on decisions that affect peoples’ daily lives underlines the demand for decentralization by Maldivians.

Greater accountability would result from the enhanced role and responsibilities of local councils in planning and implementation of development projects and service delivery to the population. During consultations for the MAPS engagement, participants referred to a lack of clarity on the roles and responsibilities across various levels of government, especially between central government and local councils, with this resulting in deferment to the central government in most cases. This seeming confusion results in part from the lack of alignment of the legal framework with the Decentralization Act which significantly changed the governance structure in the country. While several laws have been amended over time to address inconsistencies, several pieces of legislation still require adjustment.¹⁵¹

During consultations for the MAPS engagement, specific reference was made to the Land Act which has implications on the ability of local councils to raise revenue by leasing or otherwise deciding on the use of land on their islands due to burdensome administrative procedures requiring approval at the central level. An in-depth assessment of the decentralization process in Maldives undertaken in 2019 notes a similar concern of local councils participating in the study that the Land Act and the Public Finance Act are constraining the decentralization process, though views differ on whether the legislation has inconsistencies or there is disagreement on the scope of local council prerogatives when taking action on matters covered by such laws.¹⁵² Another unresolved issue relates to the Civil Service Law which covers island council staff, limiting the authority of local councilors over personnel which at times has led to friction.¹⁵³ During consultations for the MAPS engagement, participants highlighted poor coordination between local councils and central government entities, undermining the effectiveness of development efforts.

Limited capacity and other barriers facing Women’s Development Committees in the decentralization process hinders progress towards more participatory approaches.

The Women’s Development Committees are expected to play a significant role at community level, including advising local councils on development issues. An assessment of Women’s Development Committees undertaken in 2015, however, identified several challenges to the proper functioning of the committees, even if it concluded that these committees are organized and active across the islands and are driving diverse types of activities. Some of the challenges identified include the limited financial resources they command to develop activities, poor working relationships with local councils, rivalry among committee members across party lines and negative perceptions of women in public life. Moreover, 55 percent of the Women’s Development Committees that participated in the study indicated not being consulted by the local council on issues related to island development, partly due to a disregard of women’s views.¹⁵⁴ Renewed impetus for decentralization should consider specific measures to strengthen the Women’s Development Committees and ensure local councils implement provisions of the Decentralization Act by systematically consulting these committees on matters of island development and service provision to enhance inclusion.

Civil society is an important actor for community mobilization and participation, contributing to strengthening accountability and social cohesion.

The Strategic Action Plan acknowledges the important role of civil society in building strong communities and advancing the island life underpinned by more decentralized governance. It supports the need to develop capacity among Community Social Groups –(which the Strategic Action Plan seeks to institutionalize and expand throughout the country), Women’s Development Committees and civil society organizations so that these groups can more fully engage with government and contribute to community strengthening and service and programme

¹⁵¹ Transparency Maldives (2019). Review of the Decentralization Framework in the Maldives, p. 60.

¹⁵² Transparency Maldives (2019). Review of the Decentralization Framework in the Maldives, p. 60.

¹⁵³ Transparency Maldives (2019). Review of the Decentralization Framework in the Maldives, p. 64-65.

¹⁵⁴ Transparency Maldives (2015). Assessment of Women’s Development Committees in the Maldives, p.12.

delivery. During consultations for the MAPS engagement, participants raised the heterogeneity of civil society organizations in Maldives, noting that non-governmental organizations with stronger capacities are concentrated in the capital city area. Many lack technical expertise, finance and awareness. An in-depth assessment of civil society organizations in the country makes a similar point and stresses significant differences in terms of the scope of issues addressed, finances, ability to mobilize resources, governance structures (with many based on volunteerism lacking formal governance structures like separate management and board responsibilities) and overall capacity.¹⁵⁵ On the other hand, 38 percent of civil society organizations that responded to the stakeholder survey conducted by the MAPS engagement indicated that they are already working with local councils, and key stakeholders pointed to the potential of leveraging their local level contribution even further if their overall capacity could be strengthened.

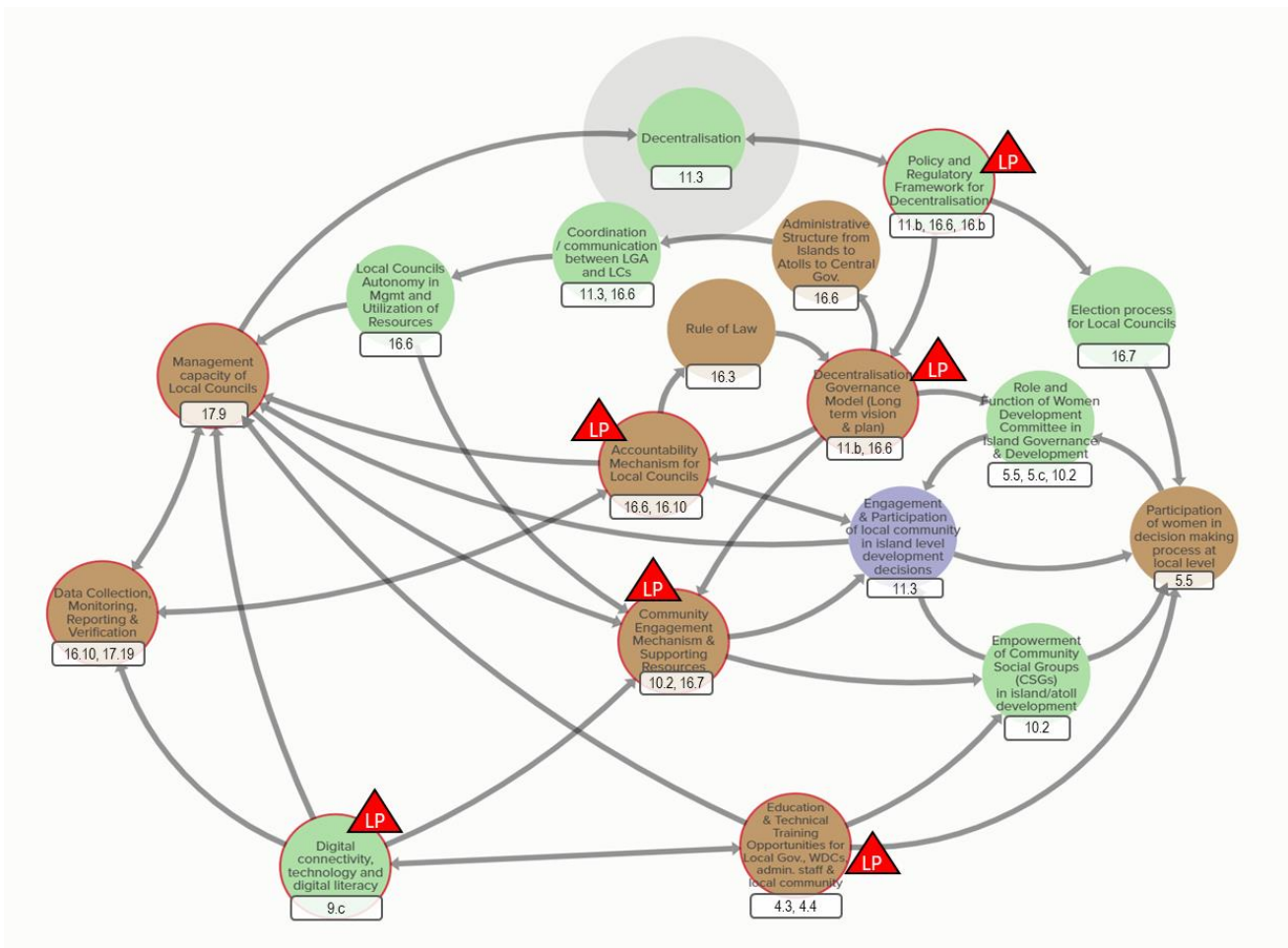
Figure 16 below presents the decentralization diagram showing the key components or nodes of the system around governance, accountability and community engagement. The node on policy and regulatory framework constitutes a leverage point because it defines the decentralization model, the powers and responsibilities of actors at different levels of governance and the space for civil society and other key actors to participate in the decentralization process. Because views differ on the desired scope of devolution of responsibilities to local councils and the powers of local councils based on the existing legal and regulatory framework and there is confusion over the roles and responsibilities of different actors in the decentralization process, intervening in this node could help advance decentralization. It can also contribute to advancing SDG 11.b.2 focused on the proportion of local governments that adopt and implement local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with national disaster risk reduction strategies.

The diagram similarly shows the important role of training and capacity development of decentralization actors to allow them to participate and hold local councils and central government accountable for development results and to contribute effectively to service provision. During consultations for the MAPS engagement, participants mentioned that local councils lack the capacity, resources and mechanisms to effectively engage the community in local decision-making, though the situation varies across councils. Addressing this limitation is essential if the decentralization process is to close gaps in participation and accountability in Maldives and it is thus identified as a point for intervention. Intervening in the node on Education and Technical Training Opportunities for local governments, Women's Development Committees, administration staff and local communities can promote progress on SDG 4.3 which targets equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university, and SDG 4.4 which aims to substantially increasing the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship.

The use of digital technologies provides opportunities for enhancing capacity and avenues for participation by citizens and is thus a priority to enhancing access to digital technologies and skills to support the decentralization process and the expected benefits of such process for development results. Intervening in this node can also advance SDG 9.c which targets a significant increase in access to information and communications technology.

Figure 16: System diagram on decentralization – Governance, accountability and community engagement and participation

¹⁵⁵ UNDP Maldives (2011). Comprehensive Study of the Maldivian Civil Society.



The ability of local councils to exercise their functions and provide services to local communities remains limited due to a lack of financial resources. During consultations for the MAPS engagement, participants, including local councilors, highlighted limited financing as a major barrier to decentralization. The stakeholder survey echoes these concerns, with 48 percent of respondents designating the inability of local councils to raise revenue among the top challenges for decentralization. The local council grant that has been paid to councils for the last two years covers recurrent costs, such as salaries, but is not enough for development programmes. The impact of COVID-19 on government revenue, which is the basis for the calculation of the local council grant, led to lower transfers in 2020 and 2021 than would have otherwise been under regular economic growth scenarios of the past.

The capacity to mobilize resources varies across island councils based on resource endowment (e.g., availability of land to lease) and other factors of a historical or contextual basis. At the atoll level, consultations for the MAPS engagement indicate the atoll’s role on development activities is limited because major development decisions, such as the use of resources or allocation of development projects in uninhabited islands, rest with the central government. The devolution of responsibilities to local countries should go hand in hand with measures to strengthen their ability to raise revenue in a way that considers context specificities to achieve equitable results.

A perceived lack of capacity of local councils to discharge their responsibilities hinders smooth collaboration across different levels of government. Results of the stakeholder survey support this perception, with 45 percent of survey respondents identifying the weak capacity and skills of local councils to develop local planning aligned with national planning documents as a challenge to decentralization. Moreover, 63 percent of respondents thought the lack of training opportunities for local councils, Women’s Development Committees and other key actors in the decentralization process

was the most important challenge for decentralization. An assessment of the decentralization process of Maldives in 2019 provides an overview of the important efforts undertaken by the Local Government Authority over time in providing training opportunities to elected members of local councils and the positive feedback from elected councils attending such training. These include familiarization of local councils with the legal framework concerning decentralization, public financial management and procurement, for example. The analysis underscores the demand from local councilors for more holistic training opportunities which involve both technical and soft skills, such as communication, leadership and presentation skills, and the possibility to network and exchange views among councilors.¹⁵⁶ Several central government entities provide training to local councils as they engage in specific technical areas. For example, the Disaster National Management Authority provides training to local councils and Community Social Groups, including women and youth, on community emergency response and guides councils in the formulation of disaster management plans under their responsibility.

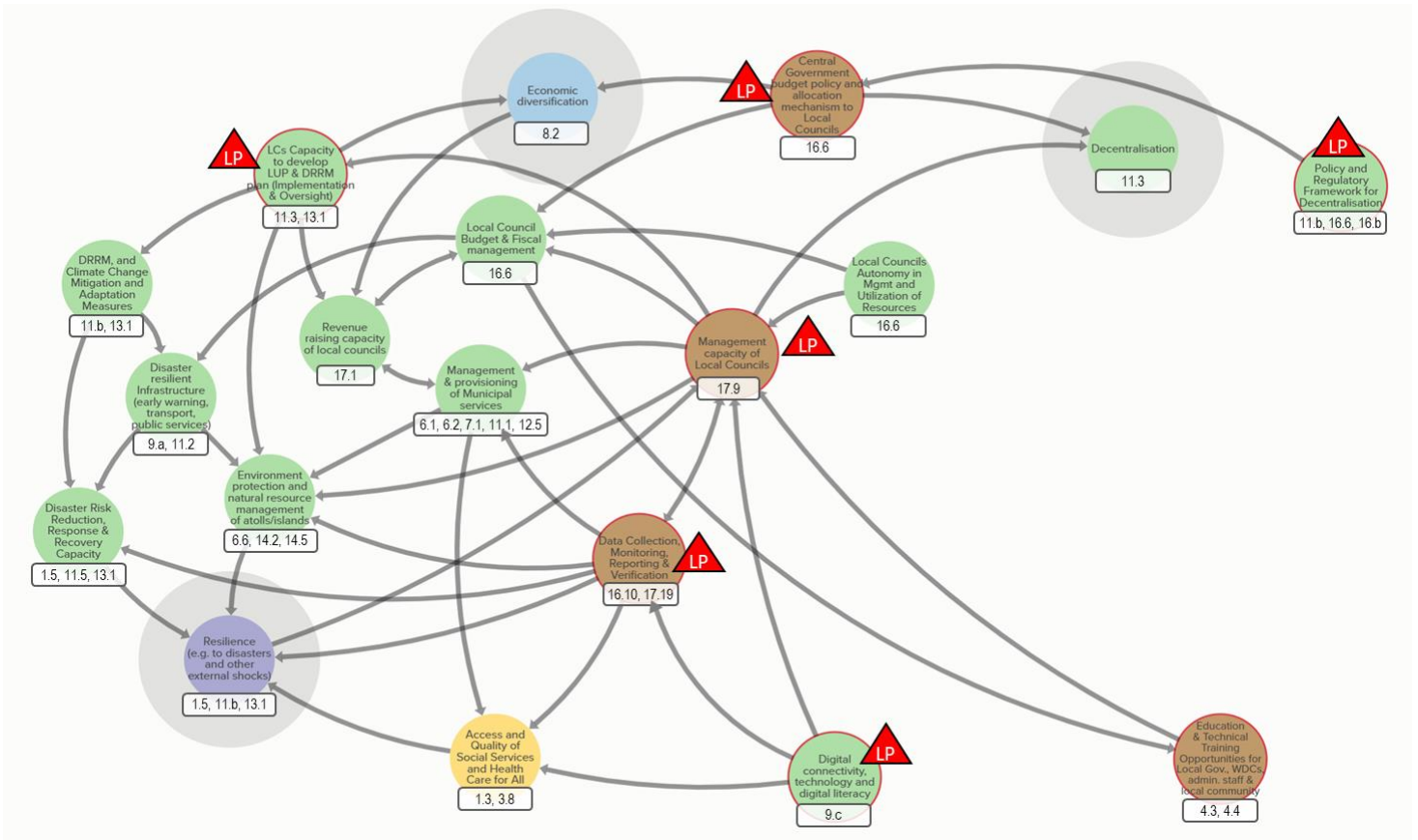
Figure 17 below (system diagram on decentralization — financing and service delivery) shows that national budget policy and allocation mechanisms constitute a leverage point due to the path of influence in the system from defining the local councils' own budget, their ability to raise funds, to their capacity to deliver quality services to the population, such as health and education, and performing other critical functions, such as waste management and disaster management response. Intervening in this node can help advance SDG 16.6 focused on developing effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels.

The adoption of a clear policy and legal framework for national development planning will enhance harmonious development in Maldives in the context of increasing decentralization. Maldives lacks a formal development planning system and institutional framework to guide stakeholders in the formulation of national development plans and their implementation. The Ministry of Planning with the support of the United Nations Maldives, launched a process in 2021 geared towards closing this important gap, by formulating a Development Planning Act and consultations are ongoing. The planning system to be established should promote the adoption of integrated perspectives on policy formulation, taking on board the three sustainable development dimensions (economic, social and environmental). It should also establish a clear process for the articulation of planning at central and island level, understanding that the latter falls under the responsibility of local councils. Local councils play a significant role in the monitoring and evaluation process since they have responsibility for supporting the roll out of social protection programmes and monitoring the situation of vulnerable populations on the islands. This information is essential for assessing and improving the effectiveness of social programmes and tackling poverty and inequality. The Local Government Authority is developing a data platform to support data collection.

The data collection, monitoring, reporting and verification node (in Figure 17 below) is a leverage point because it can influence access to services for the population by helping identify vulnerable groups, assessing their needs and improving policy through evaluation and learning. Data collection and monitoring helps improve the management capacity of local councils, which has repercussions across the system through their ability to better manage municipal and other services, including environmental services. Enhancing the effectiveness of social and environmental services enhances community resilience. Intervening in the data node can also promote progress on SDG16.10 towards ensuring public access to information and protecting fundamental freedoms in accordance with national legislation and international agreements and SDG 17.19 focused on developing measurements of progress on sustainable development that complement gross domestic product and support statistical capacity-building in developing countries.

¹⁵⁶ Transparency Maldives (2019). Review of the Decentralization Framework in the Maldives, pp. 46-49.

Figure 17: System diagram on decentralization — Financing, financial management and delivery of service



2.3 Recommendations to accelerate progress on national priorities and SDGs

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is broad and ambitious. The acceleration framework outlined in this report highlights focus areas across the SDG pillars that require attention in Maldives and highlights specific points for intervention, referred to as leverage points-, to accelerate progress on three key national priorities – economic diversification, building resilience and decentralization – while advancing the SDGs.

As discussed earlier in the report (See Box 2 on Meadow’s approach to leverage points), a certain hierarchy exists among leverage points and considerations for their use to achieve strategic change in a system may require looking more closely at interactions across them. For instance, it is noted that intervening in mid to shallow leverage points has the potential to create the conditions required for setting in motion more difficult, but higher impact, leverage points. In certain circumstances, deeper changes may be a prerequisite for superficial interventions to work.

In deciding on a strategic approach and direction for accelerating sustainable development in Maldives, it was important to identify the ‘nexus leverage points’ that are shared by the three national priorities. The MAPS engagement identified six nexus leverage points. While the functions of these leverage points are similar across systems, the way they manifest in each system varies – for instance, the leverage point on policy, institutional and regulatory frameworks may involve several line ministries and legal instruments, depending on the specific issue at hand.

The nexus leverage points identified are described below.

- ✓ **Policy, Institutional and regulatory frameworks and mechanisms (deep leverage point).** It defines the rules of the system creating incentives and constraints, for example, and is the primary driver for all that follow in the system.
- ✓ **Quality and availability of training and education (deep leverage point).** Quality education and training develops the capacity of individuals to participate in society whether as better skilled workers to integrate into the labour market or better-informed citizens to participate in decision-making at community level. Quality education can also change people’s views and prepare leaders for more holistic approaches, such as a broader sustainability lens as opposed to silo views of development.
- ✓ **Leadership and management capacity of government at all levels (deep leverage point).** This leverage point is potentially very impactful as leadership can contribute to changing mindsets and paradigms in a system. It also relates to effective institutions across levels of governance with stronger capacities potentially having positive impacts on the quality of services, accountability of institutions, etc.
- ✓ **Digital connectivity, technology and digital literacy (mid leverage point).** This leverage point is associated with access to information and ability to self-organize, both of which empower individuals to become active members in society.
- ✓ **Community engagement mechanisms and participation in local development decisions (shallow to mid leverage point).** This leverage point is associated with feedback and information flows in a system and the ability of community members to self-organize.
- ✓ **Women’s empowerment, engagement and participation (mid to deep leverage point).** This leverage point refers to feedback and information flow in the system and ability of members to self-organize. At the same time, women’s empowerment is associated with leadership and can contribute to higher level impacts through change in mindsets and paradigms in the system.

The recommendations that follow provide a synthesis of the knowledge acquired through the MAPS engagement. The recommendations are structured according to the SDG pillars, while informed by the

above discussion on the nexus leverage points, with specific indication of those nexus leverage points more closely associated with the various recommendations. When engaging with stakeholders on taking forward the recommendations of the SDG Roadmap, the systems approach can be used to deepen the analysis about the type of leverage point the recommendations represent and how the set of recommendations can be sequenced for better effect. Another variable to discuss is the time lag for various interventions to produce results in the system, which can also inform the sequencing and prioritization of actions over time.

People

Recommendation. Empower women to participate in the economy and public life, protecting human rights and gender equality.

Maldivian women and girls represent half the country’s population, and they are well qualified. However, several barriers prevent their full participation in society leading to inequality and sub-optimal development outcomes. Achieving gender equality in Maldives requires accelerated action in three spheres: enhancing women’s economic participation; encouraging women to participate in politics and other leadership positions; and protecting women’s right to live without fear of violence. Below are specific actions to support this recommendation.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve access to adequate and affordable childcare and prepare for long-term care and community-based care for older persons, to allow women to take up responsibilities outside the home. 	Women’s empowerment, engagement and participation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote participation of girls and women in technical specializations through TVET and ‘non-traditional’ fields (such as STEM), through enhanced career counselling and pro-active mechanisms, such as scholarships, internships and other forms of integration dedicated to women. 	Women’s empowerment, engagement and participation. Quality and availability of training and education.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage agencies in charge of social protection and labour market policies to pay special attention to women’s needs through pro-active identification of vulnerable women and support their integration into the labour market. Work closely with local councils and community actors in this area. 	Leadership & Management Capacity of Government at all levels.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote programmes for women’s entrepreneurship, expanding the sectoral scope of their labour force participation and implement mentorship programmes for businesswomen in close collaboration with private sector actors. 	Quality and availability of training and education.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support women’s engagement and participation in political parties and interest groups to promote from within and bottom-up movement of women into political appointments and elected position. 	Women’s empowerment, engagement and participation. Community engagement mechanisms and participation in local development decisions.

- Increase awareness of electoral processes and build capacity for women’s political participation. Women’s empowerment, engagement and participation. Leadership & Management Capacity of Government at all levels.
- Work with media, schools and civil society organizations at national and local levels through a campaign to promote gender equality, women’s rights and women’s role in public life. Use role models and mentoring support to encourage young girls to take up leadership roles. Women’s empowerment, engagement and participation. Leadership & Management Capacity of Government at all levels.
- Strengthen systems and infrastructure to protect women and girls who are victims of violence. Leadership & Management Capacity of Government at all levels.
- Encourage members of Women’s Development Committees to run for local council elections. Women’s empowerment, engagement and participation. Leadership & Management Capacity of Government at all levels.
- Increase women’s access to sexual and reproductive health services, including promotion of contraceptive choices and risk mitigation for gender-based violence. Leadership & Management Capacity of Government at all levels.
- As migrant workers contribute significantly to the demographic dividend, invest in their health and social protection. Leadership & Management Capacity of Government at all levels.

Recommendation. Reform social protection systems to effectively protect people from deprivations and address inequality.

A multidimensional and integrated approach to poverty reduction is critical for achieving the SDGs. This includes improved access to and availability of social services, supportive case management work and the provision of social assistance.

Care and support services include a range of interventions that help to identify and respond to vulnerability and deprivation, particularly at the child and household levels. These services help reduce social vulnerability and exclusion, strengthen resilience and capacity to cope with and overcome shocks and strains and link children, women and families to existing programmes and services, including in the labour market. Providing such services in Maldives requires effective close

cooperation between entities at central and local government and effective decentralization with clarity of roles and responsibilities for local councils in the implementation of programmes.

The actions below can help support these recommendations.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adapt the legislative framework for social protection, providing a holistic and rights-based definition, scope and demarcation of responsibilities. 	<p>Policy, institutional and regulatory frameworks and mechanisms.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a single registry for beneficiaries of social protection and other benefits, accessible to all government entities at central and local level, providing comprehensive and real time data on the status of benefits by beneficiaries of social protection programmes. 	<p>Leadership and management capacity of government at all levels. Digital connectivity, technology and digital literacy.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopt a more holistic approach to social protection that involves, in addition to cash transfers, a suite of services to respond to the needs of vulnerable populations (e.g., nutrition information to mothers, financial literacy, etc.) with a strong emphasis on outreach. 	<p>Leadership and management capacity of government at all levels.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define clear roles and responsibilities for local councils in the delivery of social protection programmes and establish effective coordination mechanisms with central government entities. This is essential to ensure equity in access for population in the atolls, with local councils and other local actors assisting in the identification and monitoring of social protection programmes, which central entities based in the capital cannot deliver. 	<p>Leadership and management capacity of government at all levels.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a social assistance programme consisting of regular cash transfers to the poor and people vulnerable to fall into poverty, a universal child grant and a contributory unemployment insurance programme with mechanisms to allow and incentivize people in the informal economy to join the programme. 	<p>Leadership and management capacity of government at all levels.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish monitoring and evaluation frameworks for the overall system and individual programmes. 	<p>Leadership and management capacity of government at all levels.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate bilateral social security agreements with sending countries of migrant workers. 	<p>Leadership and management capacity of government at all levels.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide capacity development and training for staff at central and atoll level for the design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of social protection programmes. 	<p>Leadership and management capacity of government at all levels.</p>

Quality and availability of training and education.

- Consider reform of regressive subsidies, i.e., indirect food and fuel subsidies, and adopt cost control measures on social programmes, such as health insurance (e.g., by introducing the use of generics). These reforms can open some fiscal space and, together with an analysis of the long-term costs of social protection in the future, create opportunities to enhance coverage and effectiveness of the social protection system as per the actions suggested here.

Leadership and management capacity of government at all levels.

Planet

Recommendation: Systematically adopt a circular economy approach to guide policy responses to waste management in Maldives.

While the Strategic Action Plan has set the goal of a complete ban on the use and sale of single-use plastic by 2023, this is not enough to address in a sustainable and comprehensive manner the problem of waste in the country. The below actions can support a shift towards the adoption of circular economy systems.

- Recognize and improve understanding of the connection between land-based activities (e.g., pollution and waste, infrastructure development) and the ocean and other marine resources.

Quality and availability of training and education.
Leadership and management capacity of government at all levels.

- Undertake a material analysis of the waste streams in Maldives to inform policy changes to promote reducing, re-using and recycling of waste. Put in place an integrated waste management strategy.

Leadership and management capacity of government at all levels.

- Step up enforcement of bans on the dumping at sea and open burning of waste.

Leadership and management capacity of government at all levels.

- Review resources available for island councils to manage waste collection, sorting, storage and delivery to waste management centres.

Leadership and management capacity of government at all levels.

- Review the green tax against the need to adequately finance waste disposal and circular economy measures.

Leadership and management capacity of government at all levels.

- Actively explore multistakeholder partnerships related to circular economies (waste as a resource), including through the establishment of a partnership platform with government and private sector champions. Community engagement mechanism and participation in local development decisions.
- Support human resource capacity development across government and other key actors to support a shift in mentality and practice towards circular economy systems. Quality and availability of training and education.

Recommendation: Strengthen the institutional capacity for environmental management, including monitoring and assessment and enforcement capacity.

The actions below could be undertaken to enhance environmental management.

- Systematize collection and publication of environmental data and leverage the use of digital technologies for the collection and analysis of such data. Leadership and management capacity of government at all levels.
- Improve the valuation of marine resources and ecosystem services to be able to factor in values in development planning and decision-making on economic and other activities. Leadership and management capacity of government at all levels.
- Implement water efficiency measures and put in place related standards and guidance. Leadership and management capacity of government at all levels.
- Strengthen environmental assessment processes, including through enhanced public participation and training for Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) practitioners. Leadership and management capacity of government at all levels. Community engagement mechanism and participation in local development decisions.
- Expand and more effectively manage marine protected areas, including through the preparation of management plans and supporting the capacity for the development of land use plans. Leadership and management capacity of government at all levels. Quality and availability of training and education.

- Review the current environmental legal framework, including whether the current Environmental Protection and Preservation Act (EPPA) needs to be replaced by an updated law. Policy, institutional and regulatory frameworks and mechanisms.
- Improve awareness of environmental laws and strengthen their enforcement, including capacity building in the legal community. Leadership and management capacity of government at all levels.

Prosperity

Recommendation. Embrace an inclusive and holistic approach to the development of a sustainable blue economy to leverage ocean and marine resources towards inclusive and long-term development.

The Strategic Action Plan recognizes the close association between the country’s economy and wellbeing and the health of the natural environment, especially the ocean. It has prioritized the development of the blue economy as the overarching framework for driving economic growth, with a strong emphasis on economic diversification and inclusion to help drive more balanced development outcomes. Nevertheless, a clear statement of the meaning of blue economy in the Maldivian context is lacking and the sectoral scope, as defined by the subsectors in the Strategic Action Plan, excludes others that have a bearing on marine resources (e.g., energy, waste, sand mining). Moreover, no overarching strategy and institutional structure exists to drive the development of the blue economy forward, in a coherent manner.

Also, Maldives may consider the possibility of expanding economic diversification efforts towards sectors beyond those explicitly highlighted in the Strategic Action Plan. One avenue is expanding the horizon of the blue economy concept, turning environmental stewardship of the ocean and marine resources into a source of innovation, growth and sustainable development. Another is accelerating the adoption of digital technologies and skills by individuals, households and enterprises, including small- and medium-sized enterprises. This in turn would favour the possible adoption and expansion of trade in services as an export sector. The below actions can contribute to this objective.

- Prepare a blue economy strategy that articulates an integrated view of all economic activities – including established ones, such as fisheries, and potential new and emerging activities, such as clean energies, that fall under the remit of the blue economy in the Maldivian context – and promote an integrated approach to their development ensuring environmental sustainability and social inclusion. Policy, institutional and regulatory frameworks and mechanisms.
- Enhance the data and monitoring framework and capacity for the blue economy, leveraging digital and other modern technology. Leadership and management capacity of government at all levels. Digital connectivity, technology and digital literacy.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen capacity for planning, programming, monitoring and evaluation of the blue economy in the private and public sectors, including at local level. This includes using effective use of tools, such as marine spatial planning, establishment and proper management of marine protected areas and integrated coastal zone management approaches. 	Leadership and management capacity of government at all levels.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote participatory approaches to the planning and management of the blue economy. This is especially critical in the Maldivian context considering the geographical fragmentation, increasing autonomy of local councils through decentralization and the vital role of private sector actors, such as resort operators, in the management of the blue economy. 	Community engagement mechanism and participation in local development decisions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Step up oceanic and climate research and international cooperation at regional and global level, inclusive of data collection and sharing. 	Leadership and management capacity of government at all levels.

Recommendation. Accelerate the shift of the tourism sector towards more inclusive and sustainable development models that promote sustainable production and consumption and circularity in the tourism sector.

Tourism activities that are better integrated into local value chains can help promote economic diversification and employment generation. Maldives has made progress in the development of guesthouse tourism in inhabited islands which brings international tourism closer to local communities and opens the possibility of triggering opportunities in the local economy through tourism-related goods and services. Continued policy support for more diversified tourism offerings, including guesthouse tourism, can contribute to inclusiveness, although environmental impacts, such waste, will need to be carefully managed.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance awareness of sustainable and circular economy practices in the tourism sector through case studies, guidance material and exchange of good practices. 	Quality and availability of training and education.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider development of policy and regulatory mechanisms as well as voluntary standards and certifications addressing circularity in the tourism sector (waste, water, energy) and promote sustainability reporting. 	Policy, institutional and regulatory frameworks and mechanisms.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance support for small-scale and local tourism operators in the context of broader support for small- and medium-sized enterprises. 	Quality and availability of training and education.

Box 16: Promoting sustainability and circularity in the hospitality industry

The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) describes sustainable development as: "Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities." As countries and

the hospitality industry strive to realize sustainability, a range of voluntary standards, guidelines and certification schemes can help advance the process.

The Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) Destinations Criteria are one example, designed as the minimum that any tourism destination should aspire to reach, with applicability to the entire tourism sector. They are organized around four main themes: sustainable management; socio-economic impacts; cultural impacts; and environmental impacts. Against each of the criteria, one or more of the 17 SDGs is identified. Among other things, the criteria can serve as the basis for certification for sustainability and as basic guidelines for destinations that wish to become more sustainable.

Reference: Global Sustainable Tourism Council, Destination Criteria Version 2.0 December 2019, www.gstcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/GSTC-Destination-Criteria-v2.0.pdf.

Recommendation. Improve the local ecosystem, infrastructure and support services for small- and medium-sized enterprises with particular focus on youth and women-led enterprises.

A dynamic private sector is important for advancing the inclusion and sustainable economic diversification agenda in Maldives, and SMEs in the formal and informal economy are necessary to drive these efforts. While the promotion to SMEs is high on the government’s agenda and a series of initiatives are ongoing, the scope, scale and coverage of existing efforts needs deepening. The below actions have been identified through the MAPS engagement as of critical importance to complement and improve current efforts.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen the policy and institutional environment for SMEs, including the adoption of a clear and common definition of SMEs to allow improved data collection, analysis and evidence-based policymaking and support mechanism. | <p>Policy, institutional and regulatory frameworks and mechanisms. Leadership and management capacity of government at all levels.</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance access to finance for SMEs. This requires continue expansion of SME Development Finance Corporation (SDFC) activities, as well as enabling the use of fintech and other innovative financing mechanisms for SMEs, such as accounts receivable financing, the use of digital platforms for assessing credit worthiness of entrepreneurs, loan guarantees to facilitate access to finance through local commercial banks, etc. Perceived barriers, such as the high cost of connectivity, need to be addressed. | <p>Digital connectivity, technology and digital literacy.</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide policy advice and technical assistance through Business Centers, or other supporting and mentoring mechanisms, to enhance productivity, technology adoption and innovation and to increase awareness and facilitate market access opportunities. All these elements will help build SME resilience to future crises and can improve employment conditions at SMEs. | <p>Quality and availability of training and education.</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the development of a digital start-up ecosystem in Maldives. | <p>Digital connectivity, technology and digital literacy.</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formulate and roll out public communication campaigns among young Maldivians to promote and create awareness on the value of their own initiatives and entrepreneurship for self-realization. Pay special attention | <p>Community engagement mechanism and</p> |

to the role of women in business, possible identifying and bringing forward women models to inspire young Maldivians.	participation in local development decisions. Women's empowerment, engagement and participation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand entrepreneurship training, especially among women, on technical and soft skills, such as communication skills. 	Quality and availability of training and education.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively promote the development of local SMEs in the blue economy, in new and emerging sectors, such as renewable energy, environmental services, software and other digital technologies, among others. 	Quality and availability of training and education. Digital connectivity, technology and digital literacy.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen capacities and mechanisms for infrastructure project appraisals, enhancing the balance across categories of infrastructure to maximize employment outcomes and anticipate skill requirements associated with infrastructure projects. 	Leadership and management capacity of government at all levels.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopt strategies to address decent work deficits and gender gaps and promote the participation of vulnerable groups in the construction and related sectors. 	Community engagement mechanism and participation in local development decisions.

Recommendation. Enhance the employability of young Maldivians through skills development and smooth education to work transitions.

Important efforts are underway to expand TVET in Maldives with the clear purpose of facilitating the integration of youth into gainful employment. The below actions aim to enhance current efforts.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish permanent and inclusive consultation mechanisms between the private sector, government and learning institutions in the public and private sector, including civil society groups (e.g., Sector Skill Councils) to define joint approaches to the development of the TVET system in Maldives. A multistakeholder approach should be established throughout the process from needs assessment and skills anticipation to curricula formulation, delivery of training, evaluation, etc. 	Quality and availability of training and education. Community engagement mechanism and participation in local development decisions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work towards strengthening the decentralization of the TVET system in close collaboration with island councils and other community actors to enhance relevance and adaptability of the training to local needs and improve accessibility of training opportunities for youth in the atolls. 	Quality and availability of training and education.

	Community engagement mechanism and participation in local development decisions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance opportunities for dual academic and on-the-job training programmes through apprenticeships and other types of modalities to ease the education to employment transition. 	Quality and availability of training and education.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish information systems and counselling support for youth about educational and employment opportunities. 	Leadership and management capacity of government at all levels.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve labour market information and the anticipation of skills needed to better understand the situation of various groups and be able to make policy decisions based on evidence. Information on the labour market should inform the scope and curricula of TVET supply in order to cater for the economy's needs. 	Leadership and management capacity of government at all levels.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote and support skills development for entrepreneurship. 	Quality and availability of training and education.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adapt TVET curricula to include soft and transferable skills that allow individuals to adapt to fast-changing labour market conditions more readily. These include problem-solving, critical thinking, creativity and teamwork, among others. 	Quality and availability of training and education.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen the standard development, training, assessment and certification system to address quality assurance issues of the TVET system. 	Leadership and management capacity of government at all levels.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement mechanisms for formalizing competencies gained both formally and informally. 	Leadership and management capacity of government at all levels.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a communication campaign with special focus on youth to promote greater uptake of TVET and emphasize its relevance for young women. The campaign would aim to improve the reputation of TVET among youth and the population at large. 	Leadership and management capacity of government at all levels.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mainstream the use of digital technologies in curricula and for delivery modalities of TVET, taking into account the needs of youth in atolls and women. 	Digital connectivity, technology and digital literacy.

Recommendation. Leverage the power of digital technologies for sustainable development.

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the uptake of digital technologies around the world and Maldives has not been an exception. The national government has taken several measures in line with the priority assigned to ICT in the Strategic Action Plan. Discussions are ongoing between the government and UNDP for a digital assessment to take place which would allow a comprehensive evaluation of strengths and weaknesses at the current point in time. The below actions flag areas which, according to the MAPS engagement, seem particularly important in driving the development of digital technologies in Maldives going forward.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritize equity of access to reliable, high-speed and secure fixed broadband services across the country in the development of physical and other infrastructure and investments. 	Digital connectivity, technology and digital literacy.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target capacity development and training opportunities for digital literacy and training among girls and women, including women entrepreneurs in the informal economy who stand to enormously benefit from digital tools to expand economic opportunities and reconcile household and caring responsibilities. 	Quality and availability of training and education.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring forward policy and regulatory reforms and ensure governance mechanisms are adequate to facilitate the expansion of digital applications by government, households and the private sector across the country. This is likely to contribute to growth in the sector and investments and partnerships. 	Policy, institutional and regulatory frameworks and mechanisms.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster digital entrepreneurship among young men and women. As part of a more general approach to anticipate and prepare for the skilled workforce required for a blue economy and sustainable development, identify skills gaps and work with social partners in the development of curricula for TVET, apprenticeship and other programmes aimed at strengthening the confidence of Maldivians in the uptake and development of digital applications. 	Quality and availability of training and education.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess current capabilities and potential for the development of service-related exporting sectors as the digital local market expands because of targeted promotion efforts. Strategies may include adopting government-led programmes to address existing bottlenecks and leverage strengths or attracting foreign talent and investment in a purposeful way that develops local skills. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nurture strong and transparent public-private partnerships and coordination efforts for the development of the digital economy to attract domestic and international capital. 	

Peace and good governance

Recommendation: Strengthen the decentralization governance framework and develop the capacity of local councils to discharge their responsibilities.

The renewed impetus for decentralization offers a clear opportunity to Maldives to address spatial and other inequalities and promote sustainable development. For decentralization to live up to the expectations of citizens, improvements are needed in the framework, resources and capacity for decentralization. The below actions are proposed in this regard.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve fiscal decentralization by facilitating and promoting revenue generation at community level and establishing an equitable system of revenue sharing that considers specific contexts. 	Leadership and management capacity of
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	government at all levels.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build on the Local Government Authority performance index to incentivize, through access to resources and capacity development, excellence in the performance of local councils. 	Leadership and management capacity of government at all levels.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify the legal framework around decentralization, including possible inconsistencies with the Land Act and Public Finance Act. Develop guidelines on administrative procedures touching on local council prerogatives which require central government entity approval or participation. Define deadlines and accountabilities around the procedures. 	Policy, institutional and regulatory frameworks and mechanisms.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult local councils on legislation reforms that directly affect their mandate and responsibilities. 	Community engagement mechanism and participation in local development decisions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen the ability of the Local Government Authority to intercede before other government entities on behalf of local councils to streamline administrative and other procedures associated with the council prerogatives. Develop guidelines clarifying procedures, as necessary. 	Leadership and management capacity of government at all levels.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish mechanisms for accountability to the local councils and communities of civil service staff in local councils and other entities supporting development project implementation in the islands. 	Leadership and management capacity of government at all levels.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish stable and regular mechanisms for training and capacity development of councilors, in close coordination among the Local Government Authority, other government entities and development partners, on technical issues (e.g., project management, procurement, legal framework) and soft skills (e.g., communication skills). Fully leverage the use of digital solutions. 	Quality and availability of training and education.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote networking and sharing of experiences among councilors (including previous councilors) through digital solutions and annual gatherings at atoll level, when possible. 	Leadership and management capacity of government at all levels.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote participation of local councils in national development planning and establish mechanisms for the consultation of local communities in the process. 	Leadership and management capacity of government at all levels. Community engagement mechanism and participation in local development decisions.

Recommendation: Strengthen participation and accountability mechanisms at community level.

Devolution of responsibilities and resources to the islands through decentralization will not result in stronger democratic governance unless local communities and organizations are able to hold central and local authorities to account for development results. The below actions seek to empower local communities to strengthen their participation and accountability mechanisms.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that local councils consult with Women’s Development Committees on development issues and services provided for the community, as required by the Decentralization Act. The Local Government Authority should monitor this as part of the performance index to assess local councils. 	<p>Community engagement mechanism and participation in local development decisions. Leadership and management capacity of government at all levels.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that central government and local councils make support structures, financing and training on technical and soft skills available to Women’s Development Committees, in recognition of their significant role in community development. Training should include entrepreneurial skills, resource mobilization skills through project formulation, budgeting, etc. 	<p>Quality and availability of training and education.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen the institutional and human resource capacity of civil society organizations to allow them to contribute to development and service delivery as partners of local councils and to assist with accountability. Capacity development may include training on legal frameworks (such as the new Associations Act and decentralization), project management, governance of civil society organizations, digital literacy, etc. 	<p>Quality and availability of training and education.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the use of digital tools for capacity development and pool resources (trainers, finances, etc.) at community and atoll level to ensure resource efficiencies. 	<p>Quality and availability of training and education. Digital connectivity, technology and digital literacy.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote transparency of information at all levels of governance and protect civic space through freedom of expression and the media. 	<p>Leadership and management capacity of government at all levels. Digital connectivity, technology and digital literacy.</p>

III. POLICY AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR ACCELERATION

The SDGs represent a shared global agenda to tackle the most pressing challenges of our time while promoting inclusive and sustainable development across countries leaving no one behind. Individual countries contribute to progress on global goals while advancing their own development objectives and priorities. Understanding the extent to which the SDGs and targets are integrated into national policy frameworks through the national development plan, sectoral policies and strategies and other planning tools, as well as examining gaps, is the first step in localizing the 2030 Agenda. As important, however, is understanding whether systems exist that can ensure that those policies and strategies are conceived of and implemented in a manner that allows both systematic integration of the three dimensions of sustainability – economic, social and environmental sustainability and good governance (horizontal coherence) – and alignment of priorities and concerns arising at sub-national and national levels (vertical coherence). This latter point is critical in Maldives considering its geography and the impetus towards decentralization aimed at given local councils and communities greater responsibilities and decision-making on development and issues that affect them directly.

To achieve SDG-aligned policy integration in practice, countries need to establish adequate development planning and institutional frameworks, coordination and monitoring and evaluation systems to assess performance against targets through a whole of government and society approach.

Available analyses suggest that integration of the SDGs and targets in national policies in Maldives is relatively good. A comprehensive mapping of the Strategic Action Plan to the SDG targets concluded that there was 88 percent alignment, meaning that the Strategic Action Plan includes specific actions that link to the SDG targets. However, the level of ambition (meaning that the targets defined in the Strategic Action Plan are equivalent to those in the SDGs) is more nuanced: 47 percent of corresponding targets in both agendas showed full alignment on the vision and 27 percent indicated partial alignment.¹⁵⁷

The Strategic Action Plan represents a medium-term plan, lacking anchoring in a more long-term development vision for the country. The articulation of a long-term development perspective is important considering that sustainable development aimed at transformational change in the economy, society, environment and governance takes time and the specific Maldives' context of a highly contested polity at risk of significant policy U-turns through election cycles on commitments that are necessary to sustain over time to achieve sustainable development. The realization of a visioning exercise aligned with the SDG global goals involving all groups in society would be beneficial for protecting development gains and defining the key parameters of future policy directions for medium-term plans for sustainable development in Maldives.

The realization of a national vision for the SDGs would benefit from the articulation of a development planning system that identifies responsibilities and parameters of an inclusive and holistic process. The formulation of the Strategic Action Plan in 2019 filled a void in the central planning system and, together with the most recent National Recovery and Resilience Plan following the COVID-19 pandemic, represents the central policy reference in the country. Nevertheless, an established system for national planning does not exist. Such systems provide the legal framework for the formulation of national development plans and determines provisions for how those plans should be formulated. These include, for instance, provisions concerning consultation with different stakeholders, such as governmental entities, non-state actors, etc., the role of different actors at central and local levels, accountability lines, guidance on institutional structures for monitoring and evaluation, timelines, among others.

¹⁵⁷ UNDP (2020). Mapping of the Strategic Action Plan (2019-2023) of Maldives with the Sustainable Development Goals. Key Findings Report, September 2020, p. 27.

The Ministry of National Planning, Housing and Infrastructure started the process to establish such a system by working on the formulation of a National Development Planning Act and consultations are ongoing. **The MAPS engagement considers filling this legal and institutional gap critical in facilitating the alignment and realization of the SDGs in Maldives.** This becomes increasingly urgent in the context of enhanced decentralization considering that local councils have the responsibility to formulate development plans and land use plans and are expected to articulate those with national plans at central level. But in the absence of a long-term national vision and planning system that defines how the local plans, priorities and concerns are to be articulated with central level planning, current arrangements remain ad hoc and depend on the will of the central government and actors to promote the participation of different stakeholders in the process. A legal framework defining the process and responsibilities of key actors provides a better basis to ensure policy coherence, inclusion and accountability.

Maldives has established structures for SDG coordination, but they suffer from gaps in the development planning system and capacity constraints. The Ministry of National Planning, Housing and Infrastructure has the responsibility to monitor, coordinate and report on the realization of the SDGs in Maldives. The Ministry does so through an SDG Coordination Division under National Planning. An SDG Technical Committee composed of focal points across government entities provides guidance on SDG implementation across members' areas of competency and mandate. The SDG Coordination Division similarly engages with non-state actors (e.g., private sector, civil society, academia, etc.) to raise awareness and consult on issues concerning the SDGs in the country or seek their views and participation on specific activities and processes. The SDG Technical Committee is structured around five clusters of issues: economic development, social, infrastructure, environment, governance and partnerships. This structure has facilitated important initiatives to raise awareness about the SDGs in Maldives and mainstream the global goals at national level.¹⁵⁸

Nevertheless, as identified in previous analysis on SDG preparedness and alignment in Maldives, the structure is confronted with several limitations that different stakeholders brought to the attention of the MAPS team during the engagement activities. These include the limited engagement of the SDG national coordination structures with the private sector and to a lesser extent with civil society organizations; the absence of specific entry points for the engagement of parliamentarians on the SDGs; inadequate understanding across constituencies on how the SDGs relate to the national development plan and entities' responsibilities; limited human and material resources of the SDG Coordination Division to lead the coordination and monitoring of the SDGs, among others.

The MAPS team assessment is that the main weakness of the national SDG coordination structures is the absence of linkages to a broader development planning process in the country. Monitoring and coordination of the SDGs is done over and above the core mandate of government and other actors related to the Strategic Action Plan. While the Strategic Action Plan foresees an institutional framework for managing the plan itself, it is unclear to the MAPS team whether such a structure is fully operational. Nevertheless, the Strategic Action Plan makes no reference to the SDG coordination process. Ideally, the Strategic Action Plan institutional framework should be the anchor of the SDG monitoring, coordination, evaluation and reporting process. The design of the institutional framework for the management of the Strategic Action Plan has several positive elements, including: an explicit link to Cabinet as the ultimate entity providing strategic guidance for implementation; the involvement of the Policy Office of the Office of the President in leading coordination of the Strategic Action Plan managers and reporting on implementation; the participation of NGO and academia networks in implementation of the Strategic Action Plan and its institutional framework, etc. However, Maldives could still improve on the Strategic

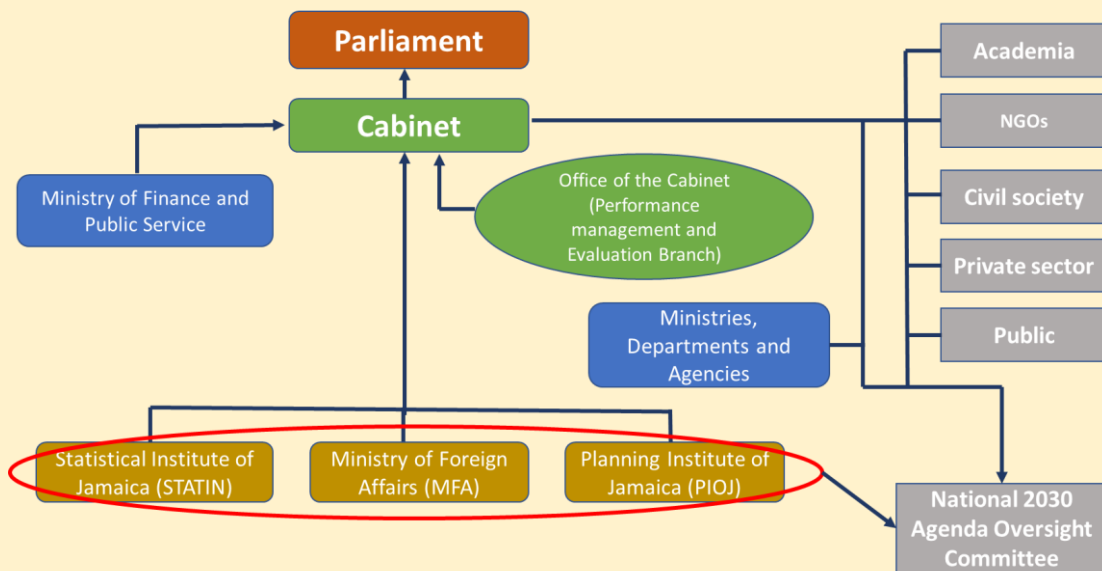
¹⁵⁸ See for example: UNDP (2020). Mapping of the Strategic Action Plan (2019-2023) of Maldives with the Sustainable Development Goals. Key Findings Report, September 2020 and MNPHI (2021). Localization and Prioritization of the Sustainable Development Goals, April 2021, Draft Report.

Action Plan institutional framework by considering the experience of other countries to adapt its coordination structures for the SDGs.

Considering the above, the experience of Jamaica is presented in Box 17, highlighting key features of the institutional framework for development planning and SDG coordination in the country.

Box 17: Jamaica's national planning and SDG coordination structure

Jamaica adopted a long-term vision document to frame the implementation of the SDGs in the country, called Vision 2030. The document defines a roadmap for “making Jamaica the place of choice to live, work, raise families and do business.” The roadmap is implemented through three-year medium-term socio-economic policy frameworks that represent a package of prioritized policies, strategies and programmes aligned to the budget and implemented by ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs). Specific sector plans and strategies complement the policy frameworks. The diagram below shows the institutional framework for development planning, monitoring and implementation of the SDGs in Jamaica.



The Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ), the foremost planning agency of the government, falls under the Ministry of Finance and Public Service. The PIOJ initiates and coordinates the development of policies, plans and programmes for the sustainable development of Jamaica. The PIOJ was established as a corporate body under the Planning Institute of Jamaica Act in April 1984 specifically to strengthen the planning capability of the government. The PIOJ Chairs the National SDG Core group composed of the Statistical Institute of Jamaica and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the National 2030 Agenda Oversight Committee (the latter of which was established in 2017). The SDG Core group coordinates reports for submission to the Office of the Cabinet. The Office of the Cabinet is responsible in turn for planning and monitoring of the MDAs.

As can be seen in the above diagram, the National 2030 Agenda Oversight Committee includes representatives of the Core group plus stakeholders from the MDAs, private sector, civil society, academia, etc. The Committee is therefore anchored in the planning mechanism of the country and takes a whole of society approach by involving different stakeholders on a regular basis. The MDAs produce Strategic Business Plans that justify budget requests to the Ministry of Finance and are used to

assess their performance. Based on these, the Office of the Cabinet produces the whole-of-government business plan that is associated with Vision 2030, linking programming and finance.

Reference: Auditor General's Department of Jamaica (2018). Jamaica's Preparedness for Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (<https://auditorgeneral.gov.jm/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Performance-Audit-Report-of-Jamaica-Preparedness-for-Implementation-of-Sustainable-Development-Goals.pdf>).

Recommendation: Strengthen the national development planning system in Maldives and anchor SDG localization, monitoring, coordination and evaluation in the system.

- Undertake extensive and inclusive consultations with national stakeholders on the National Development Planning Act and get it enacted by the Assembly as a matter of priority.
- Pay special attention to provisions concerning the articulation of national and local development planning in the National Development Planning Act to fully reflect the role of local councils and communities in development planning.
- Define and operationalize an institutional framework for SDG monitoring, coordination and reporting associated with the national development plan's institutional framework, such as the institutional framework for management of the Strategic Action Plan. Certain features to consider that have been associated with strong coordination mechanisms for the SDGs are:
 - convened by a high-level chair with the ability to mobilize and demand accountability from entities across government;
 - inclusive in terms of the participation of a broad representation of stakeholders from government and non-state actors at central and local levels;
 - open and transparent in the sharing of information; and
 - integrates monitoring and evaluation, finance and partnership functions.
- Develop the monitoring and evaluation framework for the national plan building on the SAP and the SDG targets and indicators whose mapping has been done. In addition, Annex 5 to this Roadmap includes a mapping of SAP and SDG targets to the leverage points of the system analysis which can facilitate the formulation of targets and indicators associated to the recommendations of this report.
- Define measurable and internally consistent goals and indicators, building on the SDG indicator framework, for the blue economy in Maldives.

IV. SDG FINANCING

The realization of Maldives' national priorities and the SDGs by 2030 requires substantial investments to protect development gains and address emerging challenges, such as increasing inequality. However, the country's small size and geographical dispersion creates high per capita costs for service delivery and infrastructure, while exposure to climate change and other environmental hazards represents high costs of adaptation that cannot be easily downscaled in proportion of the size of the population or territory.¹⁵⁹ Moreover, as an upper-middle income country, access to traditional concessional finance sources is limited.

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the challenges of development financing for Maldives by exposing the limits of the current economic model, which is highly dependent on international tourism revenue on one hand and public sector expenditure and debt on the other. Going forward and with the SDG 2030 target in sight, the crisis presents an opportunity for looking holistically to the changes necessary to promote a more balanced and stable development financing landscape in the future.

In this context, Maldives has embarked on the formulation of an Integrated National Financing Framework which will lead to the definition of an overarching SDG financing strategy for the country. Current analytical efforts are focused on two areas that are essential to the long-term financing needs of the country: climate finance and sustainability of social spending.

Considering the ongoing work on the Integrated National Financing Framework, the MAPS engagement would like to put forward several considerations that arise from the analysis of acceleration of the SDGs in the Maldives and its implications vis-à-vis the financing context in the country.

Increasing fiscal imbalances represent a risk to stability. Fiscal trends in Maldives over the recent past have been deteriorating due to total expenditures increasing faster than growth in total revenue. The deficit increased from 3 percent of GDP in 2017 to 5.7 percent of GDP in 2019 before deteriorating much further as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic to 22.8 percent of GDP in 2020 and 16.1 percent of GDP in 2021.¹⁶⁰ Deficits are financed through borrowing both in the domestic and international markets leading to a concomitant increase in public debt over the same period. The debt to GDP ratio increased from 55 percent of GDP in 2015 to 78.9 percent in 2019 and is estimated to amount to 125.2 percent of GDP in 2021. The stated focus of the mid-term fiscal strategy for the period 2022-2024 is improving the country's fiscal and debt position and improving debt sustainability. Nevertheless, the strategy acknowledges that meeting statutory targets of budget deficit and public debt are not feasible over the medium term.¹⁶¹

Going forward, it would be important to expand revenue collection and limit debt financing.¹⁶² Promoting private investment, both domestic and international, beyond the tourism and construction sectors is also a priority. This involves policy and regulatory reforms, including establishing a legal framework for public and private partnerships and more broadly, improving the business environment for a dynamic private sector, as discussed in this report.

¹⁵⁹ World Bank (2020). Maldives Systematic Country Diagnostic Update, Report number: 157675-MV, p. 9.

¹⁶⁰ Ministry of Finance (2021). Medium-Term Fiscal Strategy 2022-2024, July 2021.

¹⁶¹ Work is on-going with technical assistance from the IMF to consider possible reforms to the Fiscal Responsibility Act (FRA) to adapt the legal framework to the country's circumstances inclusive of COVID-19 impact and uncertainty in fiscal and other macro-economic outlooks. Work in this area seeks to establish a credible framework for fiscal sustainability and transparency which had been undermined by the no compliance of the budget balance and debt-to-GDP ratio established in the current FRA.

¹⁶² World Bank (2020). Maldives Systematic Country Diagnostic Update, Report number: 157675-MV, p. 44.

High public debt accumulation and debt servicing costs constrain Maldives' ability to finance recovery from COVID-19, climate change adaptation and mitigation and broader development objectives. The Maldives faces a triple crisis with a deep economic contraction resulting from COVID-19 having increased fiscal and debt pressures, while remaining highly vulnerable to climate change and needing significant funding to invest in mitigation and adaptation measures now and in future. The Maldives' debt profile makes it most vulnerable to refinancing risk, with 39 percent of the total portfolio maturing within 12 months from July 2021 and exchange rate risk due to uncertainty in tourism revenue and a weak foreign currency reserve position.¹⁶³

In this context, the government has been actively managing this risk: in 2021 it issued an any-and-all tender offer where 76.76 percent of a Eurobond maturing in 2022 was tendered and settled for a five-year sukuk and extending the 2023 maturity of a \$100 million bond for three years, for example.¹⁶⁴ Similarly, the Maldives joined the G20 Debt Service Suspension Initiative which provided deferment of debt service payments from official bilateral creditors. However, the deferment was extended through December 2021 and payments will come due from 2022. The 2022 national budget has been set at MVR 36 billion, with an estimated deficit of MVR 9.7 billion and allocations of MVR 2.9 billion for debt repayment commitments. This has led to discussion in parliament about the need for debt restructuring,¹⁶⁵ and the same has been evoked with major creditors such as China.¹⁶⁶

The G20 and Paris Club Common Framework adopted in November 2020 provides an approach going beyond the G20 Debt Service Suspension Initiative to address insolvency and protracted liquidity problems, which is being used by some countries to seek debt treatment options on a case-by-case basis. Official creditors of the G20, members of the Paris Club and new creditors, like China, are participating. So far three countries have sought participation in the Common Framework, all in Africa.¹⁶⁷ Against this background, the Government of Maldives may explore, in addition to efforts to reprofiling debt to smooth the impact on development financing, the feasibility of using innovative financing instruments and debt-for-climate or debt-for-nature SWAPs to better align the economic model to sustainability aspirations of the blue economy and SDGs more broadly.

A similar approach could be used by the government for new public debt by linking debt commitments to specific sustainability commitments through SDG or other thematic bonds (e.g., green or blue bonds). Under these instruments, proceeds finance projects that advance sustainable development according to a clear pre-established development framework and monitoring and reporting procedures that show to investors how proceeds contribute to the stated development objectives.

Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of public spending to enhance sustainability and promote better development outcomes. The main drivers of budget deficit and public debt over the past five years have been large public infrastructure projects and social spending, including food, water and electricity subsidies and expenditures on universal health insurance. For capital investment projects, greater effort can be made to better appraise and select projects; this requires capacity development in line ministries beyond the ministry of finance.¹⁶⁸ Moreover, it would be essential that prioritization of capital investment projects is done based on an analysis of their impact and contribution to long-term economic, social and environmental objectives, as defined by Maldives in advancing the SDGs. For instance, preliminary analysis of the financing development landscape undertaken under the Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF) process shows that close to 30 percent of overseas development

¹⁶³ Ministry of Finance (2021). Medium Term Debt Management Strategy 2022-2024, p. 9.

¹⁶⁴ Ministry of Finance (2021). Medium Term Debt Management Strategy 2022-2024, p. 8.

¹⁶⁵ <https://avas.mv/en/110316>

¹⁶⁶ www.southasiamonitor.org/index.php/china-watch/maldives-and-sri-lanka-see-debt-structuring-during-wang-yis-visit.

¹⁶⁷ Atradius (2022). Debt-for-climate: hitting three crises with one shot. Atradius Economic Research, February 2022, p. 3.

¹⁶⁸ IMF (2019). Maldives 2019 Article IV Consultation. Press release; staff Report; and Statement by Executive Director for Maldives, IMF Country Report No. 19/156, p. 11.

aid received by Maldives over a five-year period ending in 2018 was devoted to transportation services. While acknowledging the importance of inter-island connectivity and transport, it can be useful to consider whether a rebalancing to cover other priorities, such as economic diversification through support services to small- and medium-sized enterprises or climate resilience as reflected in the Strategic Action Plan, could not be more prominent going forward.¹⁶⁹ In relation to social expenditures, efforts can focus on rationalizing general subsidies and tackling inefficiencies in existing programmes, such as health insurance. This will create fiscal space to revamp the social protection system as suggested in the report, with a focus on providing assistance to the poor and most vulnerable and closing gaps in protection, taking into account the needs of an aging population. In this context, the focus in the Integrated National Financing Framework process on the sustainability of social spending is strategic in informing possible reforms in this area.

Improving linkages between national development planning and public investment and budgeting will enhance transparency and accountability, aimed at improved performance. The Maldivian government is working towards the introduction of programme budgeting as part of wider Public Management Reform. This process is helpful to align public expenditures with development priorities and to assess performance. This process can be complemented by adding an SDG-lens for assessing the budget, performance and reporting.

Different approaches can be taken towards SDG budgeting, including the scope of the exercise in terms of SDG coverage (whether it covers all the SDGs or identifies some priority goals) and the actual approach and methodology.¹⁷⁰ Maldives can explore with partners within the framework of the Integrated National Financing Framework the best approach to undertake an SDG budgeting exercise.

Recommendation: Embedded in the Integrated National Financing Framework process, consider initiating an SDG budgeting exercise and better align debt commitments to sustainable development outcomes.

- An SDG budgeting exercise could begin with a limited number of cross-cutting issues, such as climate change or gender equality, identified as priorities, tagging budget and performance targets to the SDGs. Maldives has undertaken a mapping of the Strategic Action Plan to the SDG targets which can provide a starting point for line ministries to associate actions under the Strategic Action Plan to the SDG targets, as part of an SDG budgeting exercise.
- Consider and assess the feasibility of more directly aligning public debt with sustainable development objectives through complementing any reprofiling or restructuring of existing debt using innovative instruments, such as debt-for-climate or debt-for-nature SWAPS and linking new debt to the SDGs or other thematic priorities through thematic bonds (e.g., green or blue bonds).

¹⁶⁹ Unpublished preliminary results of Maldives DFA, made available to the MAPS engagement by UNDP Maldives.

¹⁷⁰ <https://sdgfinance.undp.org/sites/default/files/UNDP%20Budgeting%20for%20the%20SDGs%20-%20Guidebook%20Nov%202020.pdf>.

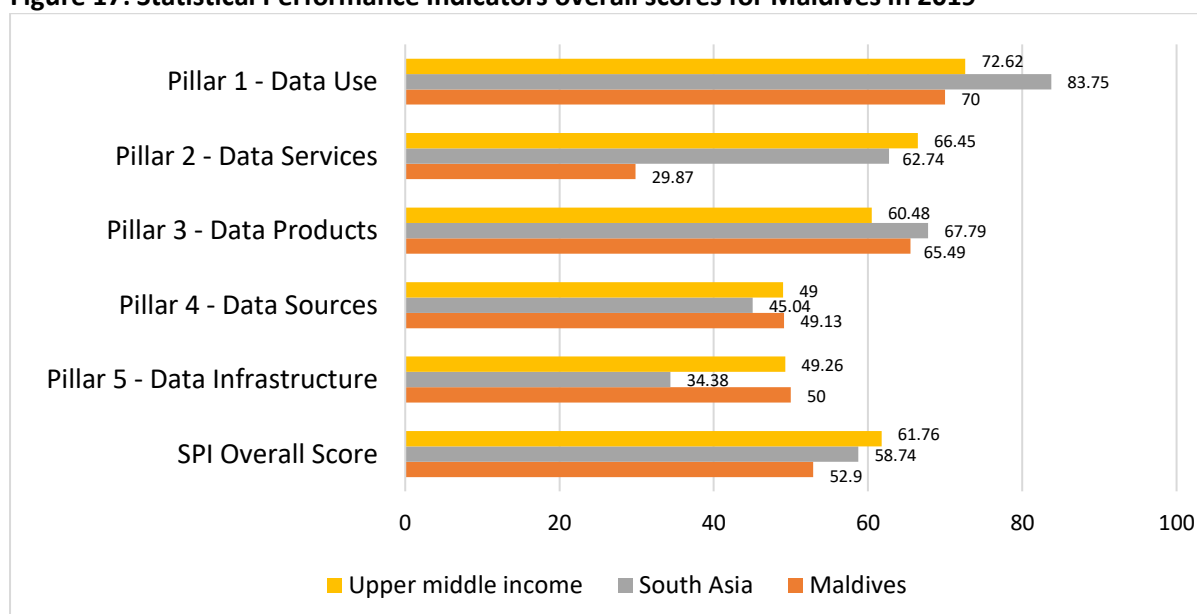
V. DATA ECOSYSTEM

Reliable, quality and timely statistics are essential for evidence-based policymaking and decision-making. Statistics provide the basis for monitoring and evaluating the results of development policy and investments, allowing for corrective action, when necessary. The adoption of the SDGs demands that all national governments step up efforts in this area considering the broad scope of the agenda and its ambition. It requires the collection and analysis of data in areas and indicators not traditionally monitored by national statistical systems and doing so with high levels of disaggregation to monitor that no one is left behind, tackling inequality and discrimination, among other challenges.

The Maldives' statistical system performs below its potential considering the country's income level. Figure 17 below provides an overview of the performance of Maldives' statistical system and how it compares to that of other countries in South Asia and peers in the upper middle-income group, based on the Statistical Performance Indicators (SPI) Framework compiled by the World Bank. The SPI covers five pillars or dimensions: data use; data services; data products; data sources; and data infrastructure, which capture the quality and maturity of the country's statistical system as a whole, i.e., beyond the remit of the statistical office.

The overall score for the Maldives is 52.9 on a scale of 100, signaling relatively poor performance. The country is below average for South Asia and upper middle-income countries and in the second quintile from the bottom among global scores. Data services score especially low, and significantly below the performance of peers. Indicators behind the data services pillar relate to the quality of data releases, the richness and openness of online access and the availability and use of data access services, such as secure microdata access. Maldives scores better on data infrastructure and data sources, on par with the average performance of upper middle-income countries, and has steadily improved its overall score since 2017.¹⁷¹ Tools such as the SPI can help inform priorities for strengthening the statistical system and thus indicate possible entry points for capacity development and support, including in cooperation with development partners.

Figure 17: Statistical Performance Indicators overall scores for Maldives in 2019



¹⁷¹ For more information on the SPI framework see: www.worldbank.org/en/programs/statistical-performance-indicators/Framework.

Box 18: Description of Statistical Performance Indicators pillars at a glance

- **Data use:** Statistics have value only if they are used. A successful statistical system produces data that are used widely and frequently.
- **Data services:** A range of services connects data users to producers and facilitates dialogue between them, thus building trust and a sense of value.
- **Data products:** Dialogue between users and producers drives the design and range of statistical products and their accuracy, timeliness, frequency, comparability and levels of disaggregation. The products signal whether countries are able to produce indicators related to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.
- **Data sources:** To create useful products, the statistical system needs to draw on sources inside and outside the government. Data collection thus goes beyond the typical censuses and surveys to include administrative and geospatial data as well as data generated by private firms and citizens.
- **Data infrastructure:** A mature statistical system has well-developed hard infrastructure (legislation, governance, standards) and soft infrastructure (skills, partnerships) as well as the financial resources to deliver useful—and widely used—data products and services.

Reference: www.worldbank.org/en/programs/statistical-performance-indicators.

Maldives has defined a vision for its statistical system through 2030 building on current strengths while seeking to fill gaps in performance. An assessment of the National Statistical System undertaken in 2017 provided a set of recommendations which have informed the formulation of a National Strategy for the Development of Statistics 2021-2030 and the Statistics Act enacted in 2021 addressing lacunae identified. The Statistics Act defines guidelines for the collection, analysis, usage and publication of national statistics, establishes the Maldives Bureau of Statistics as an independent entity leading and coordinating the statistics system and strengthens the Bureau's ability to produce data from administrative records and other sources (which had been identified as a gap in the assessment).¹⁷² The Statistics Act also establishes a Statistical Council to provide policy oversight and support the development of statistics in the Maldives.¹⁷³

These important steps taken by Maldives over the recent past lay the foundations for a stronger statistical system that provides more reliable, quality and timely data to inform policymaking and decision-making. The localization process has led to an analysis of data requirements for the Strategic Action Plan and SDGs and identification of priority SDG indicators based on the global framework, gaps in the existing data availability and need for indicator customization. The National Strategy for the Development of Statistics 2021-2030 has embedded the SDG data needs and the completion of the National SDG tracker will facilitate monitoring and reporting of the SDGs at national level. This process is closely connected to the national planning system as the determination of national priorities, goals and targets provides the parameters for the monitoring, evaluation and reporting system to be supported by the statistical system. The decentralization process provides greater opportunities to enhance data collection of a range of statistics and reach out to the more vulnerable groups to ensure they are counted.

To assess progress towards the SDGs with Maldives' national SDG indicator set and data, the country needs to maintain data series consisting of at least two data points and determine target values to be

¹⁷² Maldives Bureau of Statistics (2020). Assessment of Gender Statistics in Maldives, Maldives Bureau of Statistics, UN Women, p.27.

¹⁷³ ESCAP (2020). Reviewing the National Statistical System of Maldives. Documentation of process and results, May 2020, p. 15; and <https://presidency.gov.mv/Press/Article/24891>.

reached in 2030 for the indicators. The Maldives SDG Data Updates 2020, published by the National Bureau of Statistics (now the Maldives Bureau of Statistics), contains one data point per indicator. This provides valuable insight into the current status of the country but is insufficient to estimate historical trends and hence progress. It appears that presently target values only exist for the health-related indicators. The determination of target values is a political process, rather than a statistical undertaking, with the national planning process leading to the determination of the relevant development priorities and targets.

Based on the above and the learning from the MAPS engagement, the below recommendation and actions are identified as priorities to support monitoring and reporting on SDG acceleration.

Recommendation: Strengthen the national statistical system of the Maldives according to the vision defined in the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) 2021-2030 and for robust monitoring and reporting of SDGs to 2030. The national statistical system can be strengthened by undertaking the below actions.

- Strengthen the capacity of local councils and communities to contribute to data collection and review processes and ensure their participation in discussions on data needs and dissemination.
- Enhance the collection of disaggregated data, including gender disaggregated data, to monitor policy and inform decision-making concerning leaving no one behind.
- Establish mechanisms for the regular production of the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) and its use to inform social and other development programmes.
- Enhance data collection of international migration and its management.
- Improve labour market and employment statistics and analysis.
- Improve the quality of data releases and openness of online access.
- Collect and analyse statistics on business, and small- and medium-sized enterprises in specific, in the formal and informal economy to inform policymaking on economic diversification and for social programmes, learning from COVID-19-related support programmes.
- Work towards filling data gaps identified in the SDG update 2020 of Maldives Bureau of Statistics for monitoring and reporting across Goals 12, 14 and 15.
- Participate in the 2023 Voluntary National Report (VNR), providing an update of recent efforts and achievements on SDG localization and gaps and overview of Maldives implementation of the Strategic Action Plan and SDGs.

VI. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR THE SDG ROADMAP

The Government of the Maldives has made significant efforts to engage with its stakeholders towards the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development but faces many challenges. These challenges include a mistrust of public institutions, a divided political context and uneven access to communication technologies. This is exacerbated by a widespread perception among both policymakers and the public that the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs are a United Nations initiative as opposed to Maldives’ own commitment and engagement – both involving the government and whole of society. The government commitment to strengthening the decentralization process and democratic governance unlocks opportunities to engage stakeholders in building their communities. There is also an active civil society and IT-savvy, educated, young population, which played important roles in COVID-19 response.

Lack of consensus around some key aspects of Maldives’ development strategy and “leverage points” emerged during the stakeholder consultations for the SDG Roadmap. Lack of social consensus, perceived lack of safe spaces for transparent debate and political, gender and inter-generational differences are proving to be significant barriers to moving forward on some key issues identified in the SDG Roadmap. Island Councils will need to improve their capacity and mechanisms for engaging with local communities and specific groups of stakeholders, including Women’s Development Committees, youth and the private sector, to establish the kind of partnerships needed to support sustainable development in the context of financial, human and other resources constraints.

6.1 Strengthening transformative engagement

Engagement that empowers the public can help to strengthen public service delivery, while building capacities for civic participation in public life. Promoting the buy-in and whole-of-society approach needed for transformation and building partnerships for localized delivery on the 2030 Agenda requires moving beyond consultation towards collaboration and empowerment.¹⁷⁴ Strategies for engagement that can prompt transformation should provide opportunities for collaboration across stakeholder groups, strengthen stakeholder capacity, identify and resolve conflicting positions constructively and provide space for innovation to emerge.¹⁷⁵ It will be important to work towards de-politicizing debates on complex and often sensitive issues and working with the public to strengthen accountability in governance.

Three linked strategies for deepening engagement for delivery on the national development priorities and the SDGs are outlined in the table below.

Strategies	1. Strengthen social consensus, awareness and solidarity on key priorities	2. Strengthen accountability and provide a basis for structured community engagement	3. Strengthen mandates for community and stakeholder engagement
Rationale	Lack of social consensus on key issues is a barrier to progress. Complex issues, such as gaps between workforce capacity and employer	Service delivery shortcomings and limited community engagement and partnership opportunities point to the need to strengthening civic	Community engagement features heavily in systems analysis and survey feedback, while requirements to engage are weak. Island Councils are at

¹⁷⁴ The International Association for Public Participation’s Spectrum of public engagement identifies five levels of engagement, with “informing” and “consulting” at the lowest levels and “collaboration” and “empowerment” at the highest.

¹⁷⁵ See indicators of effective stakeholder engagement in: ESCAP and IAP2 (2019), A Planning and Assessment Tool for Stakeholder Engagement, available at <https://sdghelpdesk.unescap.org/node/1264>.

	needs, are a barrier to shared prosperity.	participation (with a “safe space”).	the forefront of localizing national agendas and the SDGs. Structured work with Women’s Development Committees and other stakeholders in civil society needs improvement.
Activity and methods	<p>1.a Transformative foresight process around the SDGs and Maldives Development Challenges</p> <p>1.b Multistakeholder deliberative process (should follow/support 1.a)</p> <p>1.c Youth deliberative process (should follow/support 1.a)</p> <p>1.d Standing Tripartite Council on employment and the future of work (should follow 1.a)</p>	<p>2.a Pilot community score card (should complement/follow on 1.a and 1.b and support 3.a)</p> <p>2.b Pilot youth score card on education system (should complement/follow 1.a, 1.b and 1.c)</p> <p>2.c Civic education pilot (in partnership with civil society and international organizations).</p>	<p>3.a Pilot community engagement on 2030 Agenda, Leave No one Behind (LNOB) and service delivery (partly informed by 1.a, 1.c, 2.a, contributing to 1.b and 2.c)</p> <p>3.b Policy and partnership for community engagement (Island Councils) (partly informed by 2.a)</p>

It should be noted that the activities under each strategy are proposed to be led by relevant government entities with the support of development partners, using professional facilitation and in partnership with specific civil society entities, as much as possible.

Each of the strategies outlined above is explained below. It is estimated that each could be completed within a two-year period.

Strategy 1. Invest in strengthening social consensus, awareness and social solidarity around critical and complex challenges and opportunities facing Maldives.

This strategy will focus on making headway on some of the complex issues faced by Maldives, which are also leverage points for acceleration. This involves providing opportunities to engage populations that may have not had equal access to public processes. In addition to making headway on unpacking critical issues and bringing them to the fore, processes undertaken can further enhance a culture around constructive debate and civic participation, fostering skills needed to confront challenges faced today and also in the future. Each process would provide insights to inform deliberations related to the SDG Roadmap and beyond. A report of each process should be reviewed by the government with a commitment to follow up as much as possible.

1.a A multistakeholder, transformative foresight exercise on the future of Maldives which engages representation, including in particular youth and women from across the country. This process can raise important questions around the challenges of rapid demographic transition, climate change, vulnerability of atolls, among others. Much-needed social consensus around specific challenges may emerge.

1.b A deliberative process on thematic issues can bring key stakeholder groups together to foster open, non-partisan debate about key cross-sectoral, integrated challenges facing the country and solutions. Such a deliberative processes would invite public participation, including youth and women, in recommending major initiatives based on a substantial exploration of driving factors, barriers and opportunities. Potential themes for these deliberative processes include: (a) a vision for decentralization; (b) social protection system reform; and (c) development of a blue economy. These proposed issues are drawn from the SDG Roadmap recommendations which build on the MAPS engagement with stakeholders.

The government may prioritize one of these topics (or another topic identified by the SDG Roadmap) and the deliberative process may be facilitated by professional facilitators with the support of relevant development partners. It is estimated that such an exercise could take three months of preparation and three months to completion).

1.c A youth-focused engagement process to develop solutions to the challenge of at-risk youth. The process that would be youth-led and comprised solely of youth, focused on the situation of youth at risk and the intersections of economic opportunity, community and family, infrastructure and other related issues. While the National Recovery and Resilience Plan identifies significant investments in strengthening the capacity of jails and other resource-intensive measures, additional society-based and support measures to address the root causes of at-risk youth are needed to complement these measures.

This process will require professional facilitation, development partner support and the leadership of the relevant government ministries. Such an exercise may take three months of preparation and three months to completion.

1.d A national council on employment and the future of work should be established as a permanent and inclusive mechanism for developing joint strategies and programmes to ensure a good match between skills development and employment and entrepreneurship opportunities and support.

Models of tripartite collaboration championed by the International Labour Organization can provide important guidance on setting up such a body. The process of setting up such a council should be carefully designed to ensure appropriate policy influence and full recognition and support by key stakeholders.

Strategy 2. Engage stakeholders in strengthening accountability of governance structures for service delivery and provide a basis for structured engagement with local government authorities.

Engagement approaches which are anonymous, yet empowering and build social capital, are recommended to strengthen the quality of service delivery.

2.a Pilot a community score card system to assess service delivery, focusing on a group of linked services. Health, or wider social protection services, may be an appropriate target given the priority given to these by stakeholders in consultations and the survey. Citizen score cards can provide immediate feedback on the quality of service delivery and aspects of community services which are working well or do not work well.¹⁷⁶ It will be important to work with island councils, Women's Development Committees and youth (as well as others) to develop score cards, which should enable

¹⁷⁶ See the description of the community score card at: www.care.org/our-work/health/strengthening-healthcare/community-score-card-csc/. A full review of the impact of a community score card scheme is available at: www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5091339/.

anonymous responses. Score cards can be deployed to complement engagement in other strategies (for example, a deliberative process on social protection reform).

2.b Pilot a youth score card system for rating lower and upper secondary schools. While proxy data is available on school performance via testing results, a youth score card will reveal qualitative issues that are influencing retention rates, among others. UNICEF notes that 95 percent of youth in conflict with the law are not in school. The youth score card will empower youth in shaping their school environments to boost retention rates and may reveal other systemic issues.¹⁷⁷ It will be important to work with both educators and youth organizations to design the score card.

2.c Strengthen/develop civic education to build long term capacity for civic participation, complementing the piloting of the score cards to strengthen outcomes, in partnership with civil society.

Strategy 3. Strengthen the infrastructure for engaging stakeholders

Engaging both internal and external stakeholders on an ongoing basis requires an institutional response and capacities to engage need to be built. A context in which engagement yields its best results is one in which the public is interested in and capable of participating.

3.a Pilot community engagement on specific national priorities and the SDGs, Leaving No One Behind (LNOB) and service delivery. This should be informed by strategies 1 and 2 and work towards 3.b

3.b Take steps to **strengthen the engagement responsibilities of government institutions**, especially local councils. Establish a policy for engagement that provides guidance for local councils, developed through a participatory process and supported by resources and partnerships with civil society. Such a policy would: establish guidelines for the types of decisions (e.g., land use planning, tourism development and other investments) that would require consultation; formalize the relationship with Women’s Development Committees; and promote appropriate partnerships with civil society, boosting the ecosystem for social entrepreneurship. This complements existing provisions of the Strategic Action Plan and recommendations of the SDG Roadmap concerning decentralization.

6.2 Following up on the survey of stakeholders

The stakeholder survey conducted for the development of the SDG Roadmap has directly informed the below proposed areas for further deliberation and action.

- Consider specific points emerging from the survey as possible actions to advance national priorities. These include, as examples, halting the release of new islands for tourism development (especially supported by younger respondents) and establishing financial mechanisms to tie local government revenues directly to economic activity on the atolls (especially supported by older respondents).¹⁷⁸
- Ensure balanced participation in further engagement. The analysis indicates that differences in opinion exist on certain issues depending on whether respondents were male or female, younger than or older than 35 years of age, or from Malé or outside of Malé. This underlines the

¹⁷⁷ See further recommendations on youth empowerment at: <https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/460551468263693729/youth-in-the-maldives-shaping-a-new-future-young-women-and-men-through-engagement-and-empowerment>.

¹⁷⁸ This can also include reviewing insights from the qualitative analysis of the stakeholders’ Survey which identifies prototypes of respondents and the type of concerns they communicated through their responses.

need for balanced participation of stakeholder groups, depending on the issue, in these processes and possibly the need to create formal engagement protocols.

These proposals complement the recommendations made in previous sections of the report. Mainly, those regarding the need to promote and create awareness among youth about the value of taking initiative and entrepreneurship for self-realization and of promoting the role of female models in inspiring young Maldivians.

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<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/335462682> Title 'DECENTRALISED-ADMINISTRATION' IN THE MALDIVES -

[1 A critical examination of 'decentralisation' as a constitutionally enabled governance structure for the Maldives 2 Why did it fail at first inst](#)

ANNEXES

Annex 1: MAPS team members

Expert	Entity
Luisa E. Bernal , Policy Specialist, Sustainable Development and Finance, Team Lead of the Maldives MAPS Engagement	UNDP
Friedrich Soltau , Senior Sustainable Development Officer, Team Lead of the Maldives MAPS Engagement	DESA DSDG
Maximilien Pardo Y Fernandez, Inter-regional Advisor for SIDS	DESA DSDG
Peter Buwembo, Labour Statistician Specialist	ILO
Xavier Estupinan, Wage Specialist	ILO
Manuel Hoff, Policy Officer, Migration and Sustainable Development	IOM
Akiko Yamamoto, Regional Team Leader, Global Environmental Finance	UNDP
Jan Smit, Regional Adviser on Official Statistics for the 2030 Agenda	UNESCAP
Hitomi Rankine, Environmental Affairs Officer	UNESCAP
Im-em Wassana, Technical Specialist on Population Development	UNFPA
Maricar Garde, Programme Manager, Country Programme Development	UNICEF
Gaspar Fajth, Social Policy Adviser	UNICEF
Enrico Boninsegna, Programme Officer (Terrorism Prevention)	UNODC
Cláudia Vieira Lisboa, Technical Coordinator, Institutional Relations and Partnerships	UNWTO
Rosa Alba Ruffo, Partnerships Officer	UNWTO
Marcel Leijzer, Department Manager, Technical Cooperation and Silk Road	UNWTO

Annex 2: Stakeholders survey methodological note

Developing the survey

The survey was part of the engagement process led by the Government of Maldives through the Ministry of National Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (MNPHI) to gather the perspectives of different stakeholders in government, civil society, academia, youth and women groups, etc. - concerning three government priorities: (1) economic diversification, (2) building resilience and (3) decentralization (of government). The goal of the survey was to consult wide array of stakeholders in Maldives (public sector, civil society, private sector) and to receive their insights on the three priority areas and to ensure that the SDG Roadmap is informed by an inclusive process that considers the views of many stakeholders.

The survey questionnaire has been designed by the United Nations MAPS Team in close consultation with the Government of Maldives and included both multiple-choice questions and open-ended questions. See *Table 1* for questionnaire structure. For full Questionnaire see Annex 3).

Table 1: *Structure of the questionnaire*

Survey section	Number and type of questions
Section 1: Respondent profile	7 questions on respondent's demographic characteristics and about their organizations
Section 2: Economic Diversification	7 questions on Challenges, opportunities and response to policies and actions in Economic Diversification
Section 3: Building Resilience	7 questions on Challenges, opportunities and response to policies and actions in Building Resilience
Section 4: Decentralization	7 questions on Challenges, opportunities and response to policies and actions in Decentralization
Section 5: Additional questions	3 questions on survey follow-up (all optional)
Total	31 questions

Sampling methodology

The main target population of the survey (sample universe) were different stakeholders in government, civil society, academia, youth and women groups in all Maldives. The stakeholder list with was compiled from inputs of United Nations Resident Coordination Office, the Government of Maldives and United Nations country teams (UNDP, UNICEF, IOM, etc.). The stakeholder list included name, position, organization and email per stakeholder. The list included one email per contact person, with very rare instances where two emails were included for the same contact person (with assumption that such person will fill out the survey once). The consolidated list included 677 emails.

The survey employed non-random sample approach by fielding online survey sent to email recipients. The compilation list of stakeholders was used as a sampling frame for the survey. Almost 50 emails were invalid or could not reach recipient and bounced back. Some of these were remedied by finding additional alternative emails of respective organizations, thus making final consolidated list of stakeholders with 687 emails (about 50 of which were not valid or could not reach the recipient). Majority of stakeholders in the list are civil society organizations (See Table 2), but the list also included sizeable share of stakeholders from public sector and several major private sector companies in Maldives.

Table 2: Breakdown of stakeholders list by stakeholder type

Type of stakeholder	Number of emails
Civil Society/Academia	523
Public Sector	129
Private Sector	35
Total	687

Data collection process

An anonymous survey was fielded online from 13-28 October 2021 using the SurveyMonkey tool. Overall, 683 invitations were sent through SurveyMonkey. The pre-notification email about upcoming survey was also sent out from official United Nations email account and two reminders were also sent during data collection period. Around 350 persons opened the survey invitation and 143 persons filled out the respondent profile of the survey. 81 respondents proceeded to answer questions in the substantive part of the survey (Section 2, 3 and 4). Therefore those 62 respondents who only filled out respondent profile and did not answer any further questions were excluded from the survey analysis.

81 respondents (N=81) participated by fully or partially filling out the substantive part of the survey. Respondents were encouraged to fill the section(s) of the survey where they feel they have most competence to comment on (sections on: Economic Diversification, Building Resilience, Decentralization), therefore each section and each question have varying N respondent rate. Open-ended questions have slightly lower N response rates due to some respondents not preferring to type in their answers or further elaborate on their multiple-choice answers.

Respondents' profile (N=81)

Age: 30% of respondents belonged to youth (aged below 35; 24 respondents). No persons below 18 participated in the survey.

Gender: 62% male (50 respondents), 37% female (30 respondents), 1 respondent preferred not to disclose their gender.

Role in their organization: 50% of respondents hold leadership/executive roles in their organizations, 23% administrative and managerial roles.

Geographical distribution: the geography was skewed towards central parts of Maldives (capital city) with 70% of respondents living in Malé (57 respondents), 30% live in outside of Malé (34 respondents).

Sectors: 38% of organizations primarily work in social, 25% in environment, 19% in economy sectors.

Stakeholder groups represented: fishers, farmers, local governments/councils, scientific and technological community, children, youth, women, elders, workers and trade unions, migrants, persons with disabilities, education and academia, religious/faith-based groups, entrepreneurs/MSMEs, tourism operators, media.

Limitations of survey research

While the compiled stakeholders list (sampling frame) did not and could not include all stakeholders in Maldives, the stakeholder list included majority of the key stakeholders of Maldives, with over 500 civil society organizations, with which government and/or United Nations country teams interact.

Few strategies to improve response rate were employed, such as survey anonymity, pre-notification email from United Nations official email account and email reminders, however, a number of factors could prevented more stakeholders from taking part of survey, such as spam settings of inboxes or email checking habits of potential respondents (i.e. opening emails from known sources and from their own organization versus opening all incoming emails), attitudes toward research, interest in survey topics, language skills (survey questions were in English only), length of survey, survey structure, timing of survey or other factors. More than half of recipients opened survey invitation email, 21% (143 respondents) filled out the respondent profile information. The final sample (81 respondents) constituted 12% of the stakeholders list (sampling frame), which could be considered typical response rate for external online surveys.

In Section 5 of the survey, the respondents were given option to waive anonymity and identify their organization. Sub-sample of 25 respondents out of 81 chose to disclose the name of their organization/institution. Within this sub-sample, most non-anonymous respondents were representatives of civil society organizations, so it could be inferred that the whole sample of 81 is likely to have similar distribution of stakeholders, given that sampling frame consists of mostly civil society organizations (see Table 3 below).

Table 3: Stakeholder type distribution in the sampling frame and non-anonymous sub-sample

Stakeholder type	Sampling frame (N=687)	Non-anonymous sub-sample (N=25)
Civil society/academia	523 (76%)	16 (64%)
Public sector	129 (19%)	5 (20%)
Private sector	35 (5%)	4 (16%)

While the survey did ask respondents to provide personal point of view as individual professionals, it is notable that half of the respondents hold executive/leadership roles in their organizations and the professional inputs provided in the survey by the stakeholders give valuable perspectives in the ongoing stakeholder engagement process. While the survey responses cannot be generalized to a broader group of stakeholders, the survey results should be treated as providing additional qualitative information in addition to stakeholder consultations and focussed discussions.

Annex 3: SDG Roadmap stakeholder survey

Help shape pathways to build resilience, diversify the economy and strengthen decentralized governance

About this survey

COVID-19 has demonstrated that the key areas of Maldives' Strategic Action Plan (SAP) need advancing. The Ministry of National Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (MNPHI) is seeking your insights on the government's three main objectives: **(1) diversifying the economy (2) building resilience and (3) decentralization (of government)**.

Purpose. Your responses to this survey will contribute to a Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Roadmap that is fit for the Maldives.

Respondents. You are receiving this survey because you are a government official or a stakeholder in Maldives' development. Your answers to this survey are valuable and will be carefully considered. Please answer the questions from your own, personal point of view as an individual professional on the Maldivian challenges, opportunities and needs.

Thank you for your time and contribution. For more information, please contact:
Development Planning and SDG Coordination Section
planning@planning.gov.mv
4004394

Instructions

Estimated time to complete: 20 minutes

Please complete all sections:

1. About you and your organization
2. Challenges, opportunities and response to policies and actions in Economic Diversification
3. Challenges, opportunities and response to policies and actions in Building Resilience
4. Challenges, opportunities and response to policies and actions in Decentralization

Your responses will be kept confidential.

Section 1: Respondent profile

1. **What is your age*** (multiple choices)

- 18 - 24
- 25 - 34
- 35 - 44
- 45 - 54
- 55 - 64
- Above 65

2. **What is your Gender*** (multiple choices)

- Male
- Female
- Other/prefer not to say

3. **In which Atoll do you live?*** (drop down - list of 20 administrative areas in alphabetical order)

4. **In which Atoll is your work primarily located?***

- Same as above
 Another atoll: (drop down options - List of 20 administrative areas in Alphabetical order)

5. **What is your primary role at your workplace?** (Multiple choices)

- Administrative
 Technical
 Communications
 Leadership/Executive
 Managerial
 Other, please specify _____

6. **What area of the sustainable development domain is your organization/institution mainly working on?** *Check the one that best applies.* (Multiple choices)

- Environment
 Social
 Economy
 Governance
 Partnerships
 Don't know

7. **If you come from a civil society organization, who are your PRIMARY stakeholder(s)?** *Check all that apply.* (Checkboxes) (Optional)

- Fishers
 Farmers
 Local governments/Councils
 Scientific and technological community
 Children (below 15 yrs.)
 Youth (15-34 yrs.)
 Women
 Elders/Senior citizen
 Workers and trade unions
 Persons with disabilities
 Education and academia
 Religious/Faith-based group
 Entrepreneurs/MSMEs
 Tourism operators
 Media
 Other, please specify _____

Section 2: Diversifying the Maldives' economy

Tourism Dependency. High economic growth in the Maldives has mainly resulted from international tourism and sectors such as construction and fisheries for export. While the tourism sector is of high economic importance for the country, there is a need to strengthen the links between the tourism industry and the rest of the economy and local communities, including improved employment opportunities for residents of the Maldives.

Risks. Maldives economy, largely dependent on internal and international travel, is impacted when world travel patterns change, such as during COVID-19. In addition, as a Small Island Developing State (SIDS), the Maldives is vulnerable to disasters and the effects of climate change.

Plans. The Strategic Action Plan and National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP) prioritize broadening and diversifying the economy by creating a more supportive business environment, promoting trade and investments and prioritizing participation from a skillful local workforce. It will also promote sustainability in the country's future development.

1. **In your opinion, what is the one most significant impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the economy of the Maldives?** (Single textbox)

2. **In your opinion, what does a strong and diversified economy - with multiple thriving business sectors - look like in 10 years from now in the Maldives? In 1-3 sentences, describe what you would like to see. (e.g. strong local atoll-based SMEs that provide needed social and other services to the community, etc.)** (Single textbox) (require answer)

3. **In your view, what are the key challenges that the Maldives faces in diversifying its economy and building up more sectors?** (Choose up to 5 top challenges) (Checkboxes, Max. 5)

- Financing: Lack of investor confidence and incentives
- Financing: Difficulty for SMEs to access finance and credit
- Business Support: Difficulty in identifying and capturing new market opportunities
- Business Support: Lack of business support services and infrastructure
- Business Support: Lack of an entrepreneurial culture and entrepreneurial support
- Workforce: Lack of retraining opportunities
- Workforce: Higher education and vocational education training not aligned with labour market needs
- Workforce: Lack of opportunities for women in business leadership roles
- Infrastructure: Lack of adequate inter-island transport and cargo infrastructure (air and sea)
- Infrastructure: Insufficient agriculture and fishery processing, storage and other value chain facilities
- Sectoral Support: Lack of strategy for inclusive growth of the blue economy from the government
- Environment: Poor environmental protection from business sector due to weak regulations and enforcement
- Recovery Planning: Difficulty in re-envisioning Tourism for post-COVID-19
- Inclusion: Lack of opportunities to integrate local communities into the economy
- Technology: The high costs of digital connectivity (i.e. Internet)
- Others: Please specify _____
- Not Applicable / Don't know*

4. **Briefly explain your thoughts on any of the challenges you selected above.**

--

5. To the best of your knowledge, what existing or emerging opportunities do you see that can help diversify the Maldives' economy (e.g. new trade agreement, new policy, etc.)?

--

6. Responses to policies, plans and actions in achieving economic diversification

In your opinion, what action should be taken for each of the policies, plans and actions listed below, to make progress on the national development objectives and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

	Policies, plans or actions	Should start	Should stop	Should continue	Should improve	N/A Don't know
1	Strengthen outreach and pursue SME business support services through Business Center Corporation (BCC) and regional business centres					
2	Release new islands for tourism development					
3	Lease of new islands for agricultural development					
4	Strengthen sustainable fishery management, technologies and practices					
5	Improve access to finance for MSMEs					
6	Empower vulnerable groups (youth, women and PWD) for employment and entrepreneurial opportunities					
7	Enforce government policy for better and more affordable internet services					
8	Engage with LGA and the island councils to implement an efficient system for island level waste management					

<p>Please elaborate on any of your answers above or add one that is not listed (Paragraph)</p>

Section 3: Building resilience

Definition

Resilience is the ability of a system - i.e. a country or community - to prevent, resist, absorb, adapt, respond and recover from a shock or disruption in a timely and effective manner without compromising its long-term prospects.

Building Resilience in the Maldives

Building resilient communities (under Jazeera Dhiriulhun) is an important part of the SAP's five pillars. Building resilient communities includes among others, the following areas:

- climate mitigation and adaptation,
- disaster resilient infrastructure,
- good governance,
- sustainable livelihoods,
- affordable, safe housing,
- reliable, low-cost transportation network,
- food, water, energy security, and
- access to basic services, among several other intervention areas.

In addition, the Strategic Action Plan (SAP) closely links community empowerment with community resilience, stating "A cohesive and connected community is key to enabling developmental activities, decentralized governance and community resilience." The experience of COVID-19 has shown the importance of community resilience - with the youth playing vital roles in the response. Economic and environmental conditions also impact resilience in the Maldives. Diversification of economic and trade links strongly supports economic resilience. Climate adaptation, disaster preparedness and protection of the natural environment promote resilience to natural disasters.

1. **In your opinion, what is the one most significant impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on community resilience in the Maldives?** (Single textbox)

2. **In your opinion, what do resilient island communities look like in 10 years from now in the Maldives? In 1-3 sentences, describe what you would like to see.** (Single textbox) (e.g. strong CSO involvement, with clear roles and responsibilities, in disaster risk reduction plans)

3. **In your view, what are the key challenges that the Maldives faces in building resilience?** (Choose up to 5 challenges) (Checkboxes) (Currently 13 options)

- Employment: Insecure livelihoods and unemployment (especially among youth and women)
- Self-reliance: High dependency on import for food, fuel and basic commodities
- Governance: Lack of mechanism to involve community members in decision-making (youth, women, vulnerable groups)
- Governance: Weak governance and rule of law at all levels
- Infrastructure: Lack of disaster resilient infrastructure on atolls (roads, ports, housing, health and care facilities)
- Environment: Overuse of natural resources and lack of environmental protection mindset
- Environment: No agreed definition of sustainability for the Maldives
- Risk Management: Lack of climate adaptation planning and capacity to manage disaster risk
- Society: Difficulty in maintaining traditional knowledge, culture and Islamic faith
- Social Services: Insufficient social support system (social protection services, health care access and quality)
- Collaboration: Weak community networks and partnerships among different stakeholder groups
- Technology: Weak data collection, monitoring and reporting systems for environment and social aspects

- Economy: Lack of economic opportunities for vulnerable groups (Persons with Disabilities, youth, women, elderly)
- Others: please specify _____
- Not Applicable / Don't know*

4. Briefly explain your thoughts on any of the challenges you selected above

5. To the best of your knowledge, what existing or emerging opportunities do you see that can strengthen community resilience across the Maldives? (Single textbox)

6. Responses to policies, plans and actions in building community resilience

In your opinion, what action should be taken with respect to each of the policies, plans and actions listed below, to make progress on the national development objectives and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

	Policies, plans or actions	Should start	Should stop	Should continue	Should improve	N/A Don't know
1	Improve capacity to formulate policy and plans and manage disaster risk, at central and local government levels					
2	Establish proper water and sanitation in all inhabited islands					
3	Strengthen enforcement and implementation of environmental protection laws and regulations					
4	Strengthen youth development and community empowerment policies and programmes					
5	Develop climate resilient infrastructure and public utility services (water, energy, waste)					
6	Improve access to social services and livelihood for all, including to vulnerable citizens					
7	Introduce telemedicine consultations (virtual medical appointments) in the atolls					
8	Implement remote learning across all schools (K-12 and higher education) and improve access for students					

Please elaborate on any of your answers above or add one that is not listed (Paragraph)

Section 4: Decentralization

Definition

Decentralization means that the central government shares the ability to make decisions with regional or local governments. Decentralization brings decision making closer to citizens, contributing to more responsive and accountable governance.

Decentralization in the Maldives

The Maldives has a spread-out geography, with significant populations living on nearly 200 islands and atolls. Decentralization is contained in the 2008 Constitution and in 2010, the People’s Majlis (the Parliament of Maldives) passed the Decentralization Act. This has expanded local governance structures and capacity to respond to community needs. The Act and its subsequent amendments states that the objective of decentralization in Maldives is “to allow the island communities to make their own decisions in a democratic and accountable manner; to improve people’s living standards through social, economic and cultural development; to empower the people; to increase scope for bringing the services closer to the people; and to create an environment conducive for peace and prosperity.”

1. In your opinion, what is the one most significant impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the decentralization process in the Maldives? (Single textbox)

2. In your opinion, what will successful decentralization look like in 10 years from now in the Maldives? In 1-3 sentences, describe what you would like to see. (Single textbox) (e.g. every atoll local council has developed and implemented transparent land-use plans)

3. What are the key challenges that the Maldives faces in decentralization of decision making and ensuring that officials respond to the needs of the people? (Choose up to 5 challenges) (Checkboxes)

- Revenue: Local councils unable to collect funds from taxes and fees to carry out their functions.
- Finance: Lack of availability of banking or other financial service facilities to atoll communities
- Capacity development: Limited education and technical training opportunities for LGA and local councils’ staff, women’s development committee representatives, etc.
- ICT: Poor digital connectivity in atolls and high cost
- Infrastructure: Poor transportation system between the different islands
- Infrastructure: Lack of municipal public utilities infrastructure and services
- Governance: Lack of political agreement concerning the scope of decentralization
- Governance: Lack of mechanisms to promote citizens participation in decision making at local level
- Governance: No mechanism to make sure that the different levels of government work together towards the same goals.
- Governance: Lack of clear roles and responsibilities of the different levels of government in the decentralization model

- Systems: Lack of data and proper monitoring and reporting on social issues, environment, etc. at atoll level
- Training: Weak capacity and skills of local councils to develop local planning aligned with national planning documents
- Other, please specify _____
- Not Applicable / Don't know*

4. Briefly explain your thoughts on any of the challenges you selected above

5. To the best of your knowledge, what are the existing or emerging opportunities that can help successful decentralization in the Maldives? (Single textbox)

6. Responses to policies, plans and actions in decentralization

In your opinion, what action should be taken with respect to each of the policies, plans and actions listed below, to make progress on the national development objectives and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?

	Policies, plans, or actions	Should start	Should stop	Should continue	Should improve	N/A Don't know
1	Develop an e-finance module so that local councils can easily collect fees from municipal services					
2	Expand responsibilities of local authorities					
3	Directly link revenue sources (taxes and fees) from local activities and services to their local councils					
4	Transfer municipal responsibilities to local councils					
5	Employ local workforce in social services in atolls					
6	Support local councils on all islands to prepare and approve a land-use plan					
7	Establish mechanisms to encourage citizens to participate in local decision-making					
8	Support women and youth leadership roles in decision-making at all levels (local and central)					

Please elaborate on any of your answers above or add one that is not listed (Paragraph)

Section 5. Thank you for your time and insights.

- 1. Please share any final thought on any of the three themes? (Optional) (Single Textbox)**

- 2. Please leave your email address here if you would like to receive information of the outcome of this process (Optional) (Single Textbox)**

- 3. Please indicate the name of the organization / institution where you work? (Optional)**

ANNEX 4: CGE MODELLING OF AN INCREASE IN PUBLIC SPENDING ON EDUCATION IN MALDIVES¹⁷⁹

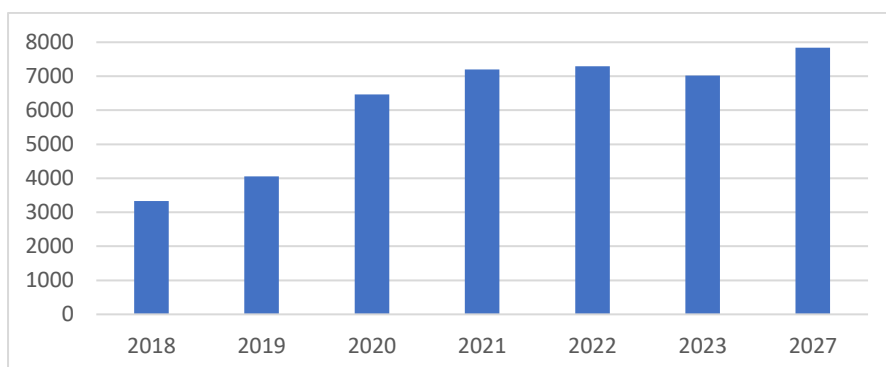
Introduction

Investment in higher education and in technical and vocational education and training (TVET) is one of the fundamental factors of human capital development. Investment in general education is important for economic growth and social inclusion while investment in TVET is an instrument for promoting socioeconomic progress. TVET increases employability and raises productivity and wages of disadvantaged groups, and thus has the potential to contribute to higher incomes and wider benefits that include economic growth, social inclusion, and cohesion in society.

TVET has potential to be adaptive and transformative through integrating supply-side and demand-side of TVET by engaging employers and firms to appropriately equip trainees for the job market and to equip the market for TVET graduates by considering their needs and aspirations. In the Maldives, this approach can help address the skills mismatch between relevance and quality of new graduates and the need of economic sectors. Considering the needs of both employers and graduates can also help the country in delivering quality education that is aligned to the needs of industry. With more relevant improved skills, the country will be well positioned to diversify its economy.

Projections of public sector spending on education are available from the National Transfer Accounts (NTA) and from the Education Sector Plan (ESP) documents. The Maldives ESP, developed by the Ministry of Education in collaboration with the Ministry of Higher Education, gives a detailed plan for the country's education sector (Ministry of Education & Ministry of Higher Education, 2019). It gives information on both total planned spending (Figure 1) and infrastructure spending (Figure 2) respectively.

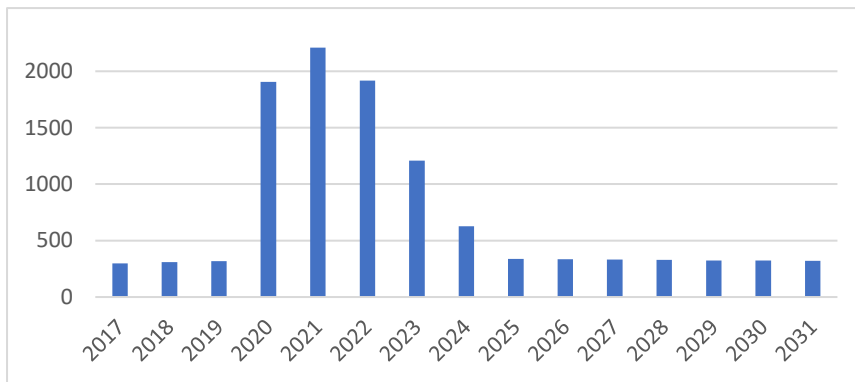
Figure 1: Projections of education sector total spending (MVR millions)



Source: Ministry of Education & Ministry of Higher Education (2019)

¹⁷⁹ This note has been produced by UNDP SDGi team for the Maldives MAPS engagement.

Figure 2: Projections of education sector infrastructure spending (MVR millions)



Source: Ministry of Education & Ministry of Higher Education (2019)

CGE Modelling for analysing an increase in expenditure of education

Computable General Equilibrium (CGE) modelling is a significant economic analysis tool for evaluating policy design and macroeconomic shocks. It is one of the most rigorous quantitative methods to estimate economy-wide impacts of economic and policy shocks. A CGE model mimics the structure of the economy and captures the economic transactions prevailing among different economic actors. It is richer relative to other techniques – as it captures a wider set of economic impacts emanating from an economic shock or policy change. A CGE model is thus a useful technique for analysing the impacts of a complex policy whose implementation is expected to arise from different transmission channels.

CGE modelling can be instrumental in quantifying the impact of policy questions related to public expenditure on education. A CGE model is used to analyse the how various socioeconomic variables are affected by targeting higher education and vocational training. CGE analysis allows the estimation of the economy-wide impact of an increase in spending on education, calculating costs and benefits, and tracing the transmission mechanisms distinguishing how different labour categories and households, productive sectors, commodities, government, and the external sector are affected.

Key dataset: Social Accounting Matrix

CGE models use economic data to simulate how the economy might react to policy or external shocks. The core of a CGE analysis is the Social Accounting Matrix (SAM), a comprehensive and intuitive snapshot of the economy that represents an economy's complete circular flow of income and serves both as a record of economic transactions and as an important tool for economic analysis. The 2014 SAM constructed by the UNDP SDGi team was used to calibrate the model.

Simulations

Scenarios that are simulated represent the Maldives educational policy measures, including a reference scenario, also referred to as the business as usual (BAU). The reference scenario, given in Table 1, reflects how the economy evolves without changes in projected public expenditure on education that are outlined in the country's Education Sector Plan. The BAU scenario for the Maldives over the period 2019 - 2027 assumes a balanced growth path based on recent trends of economic growth. This scenario serves as the counterfactual against which public spending on education is compared.

Baseline Scenario

Table 1: Projected public sector spending requirement (in 2019 MVR Billions)

	2019	2020	2030	2040	2050
Public Consumption	10.0	10.2	12.0	13.5	15.0
Education	2.2	2.3	2.5	2.5	2.5
Health	2.3	2.4	3.0	3.8	4.7
Others	5.5	5.6	6.4	7.2	7.9

Source: Maldives Government, National Transfer Account.

Average Annual Variation 2019-2030 = 1.3%

The alternative scenario reflects how the economy evolves with increased public expenditure on the education sector, based on the Education Sector Plan. This is presented in Table 2.

Plan Scenario

Table 2: Maldives Government Expenditures on Education (in 2019 MVR Millions)

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2027
Expenditure	3.3	4.1	6.4	7.2	7.3	7.0	7.8

Source: Maldives Government, Education Sector Plan

Average Annual Variation 2018-2027 = 10.0%

Table 3 gives the average annual percentage change, from 2018 to 2027, in public education spending based on the NTA data and on Maldives Education Sector Plan, which are used in the model as Baseline Scenario and Plan Scenario, respectively.

Table 3: Implemented Gov't Spending on Education, Average Annual Variation (Percentage)

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Average
Baseline Scenario	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3
Plan Scenario	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0

Source: Authors' calculation

Results Analysis

Effects on the Education Sector

Following the increase in education sector spending under the Baseline and Plan scenarios, Table 4 shows what happens within the education sector, which is where the shock is implemented. It shows how the supply of education services change because of the spending by government. The results in the Table compare the difference between the Plan and the Baseline scenarios, in 2019 prices.

Table 4: Supply of Education Sector, Variation Between Plan and Baseline Scenarios

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	All
Difference in 2019										7,501.7
MVR Million	103.0	250.6	399.2	574.2	763.6	976.4	1,210.2	1,469.7	1,755.0	¹⁸⁰
% Variation	3.2	7.5	11.3	15.5	19.5	23.7	27.8	32.1	36.5	19.7 ¹⁸¹

Source: Results from the Maldives CGE Model

¹⁸⁰ Refers to the absolute difference between the two plans cumulated over the period 2019-2027.

¹⁸¹ Refers to the average of the percentage difference between the two scenarios over the period 2019-2027.

The impact of increasing public spending on education is transmitted to the rest of the economy through the input demand of the sector and the factor demand of the sector. Table 5 and Table 6 show the difference and percentage variation in input demand and total factor (capital and labour) demand, respectively, between the Plan and the Baseline. The Plan contributes to more input demand because additional intermediate inputs are required to provide increased education services as well as to more total factor demand because additional labour and capital are needed to provide increased education services, relative to the Baseline.

Table 5: Input Demand of Education Sector, Variation Between Plan and Baseline Scenarios

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	All
Difference in 2019										1,431.3
MVR Million	20.5	47.5	76.0	108.9	145.0	185.6	230.6	280.8	336.4	¹⁸²
% Variation	3.6	8.0	12.1	16.5	20.8	25.3	29.8	34.4	39.0	21.0 ¹⁸³

Source: Results from the Maldives CGE Model

Table 6: Factor Demand of Education Sector, Variation Between Plan and Baseline Scenarios

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	All
Difference in 2019										6,109.7
MVR Million	83.0	204.3	325.2	468.1	622.3	795.7	985.8	1,196.8	1,428.5	¹⁸⁴
% Variation	3.2	7.4	11.2	15.2	19.2	23.3	27.4	31.7	35.9	19.4 ¹⁸⁵

Source: Results from the Maldives CGE Model

Factor Demand = Capital + Labour Demand

Effects on Skill Development and Labour Productivity

The two scenarios have differentiated impact across skill levels as shown in Table 7. With the Plan, there will be more high-skilled and medium-skilled people than with the Baseline scenario, an average of 2.7 and 1.3 respectively, over the period under analysis. Therefore, the Plan scenario has a stronger impact in enhancing the skill level of the population than the Baseline scenario.

Table 7: Labour Supply by Skill Category, Variation Between Plan and Baseline Scenario (Percentage)

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Average
High Skilled	0.0	0.3	0.8	1.5	2.3	3.2	4.3	5.5	6.8	2.7
Medium Skilled	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.4	0.8	1.4	2.1	2.9	3.9	1.3
Low Skilled	0.0	-0.4	-1.1	-2.1	-3.3	-4.8	-6.4	-8.1	-9.9	-4.0

Source: Results from the Maldives CGE Model

Table 8 shows how labour productivity changes over time, between Plan and Baseline scenarios. The table shows that the investments of the Education Sector Plan increase labour productivity by 1 percentage point more than what would result from the Baseline scenario on average, over the period 2019-2027.

Table 8: Labour Productivity, Variation Between Plan and Baseline Scenario (Percentage)

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Average
Labour Productivity	0.0	0.2	0.4	0.6	0.9	1.3	1.7	2.1	2.6	1.1

Source: Results from the Maldives CGE Model

¹⁸² Same as footnote 180.

¹⁸³ Same as footnote 181

¹⁸⁴ Same as footnote 180.

¹⁸⁵ Same as footnote 181.

Labour productivity = aggregate production / total labour

Macro and Sectoral Effects

Table 9 shows a higher impact on GDP as well as across the sectors when the Plan is implemented compared to the Baseline scenario. The education sector increases faster than all other sectors, because this is where the shock is applied. The sector that experiences the second highest growth is *Construction*. The only exception is the *Health and social services* sector. The reason behind the sector not performing can be attributed to the demand side effect. 80 percent of the social services are consumed by the government, but the increase of the social expenditure is low, 1.7 percent, which is much lower than the increase in the performance of the economy, which is around 7 to 8 percent. This means the demand is stronger for the rest of the economy than the demand for the *Health and social services* sector.

Table 9: Percentage Change in GDP comparing Plan to Baseline Scenario

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Average
Economywide	0.0	0.2	0.4	0.7	1.0	1.3	1.7	2.2	2.7	1.1
Agriculture, forestry	-0.1	0.0	0.1	0.4	0.7	1.1	1.6	2.2	2.9	1.0
Manufacturing of other products	0.0	0.1	0.3	0.5	0.9	1.3	1.8	2.4	3.1	1.1
Electric power generation	0.0	0.2	0.4	0.7	1.0	1.4	1.8	2.3	2.8	1.2
Water collection, treatment	-0.1	0.0	0.2	0.4	0.6	0.8	1.1	1.3	1.7	0.7
Construction	0.1	0.5	0.7	1.2	1.5	1.9	2.4	2.9	3.5	1.6
Wholesale and retail	0.0	0.2	0.4	0.7	1.0	1.4	1.7	2.2	2.6	1.1
Transportation	-0.1	0.0	0.2	0.3	0.6	0.9	1.3	1.8	2.3	0.8
Postal and Telecom	-0.1	-0.1	0.1	0.3	0.6	1.0	1.4	2.0	2.8	0.9
Accommodation and food service activities	-0.1	-0.1	0.1	0.3	0.6	0.8	1.2	1.6	2.1	0.7
Financial and insurance activities	-0.1	0.0	0.1	0.3	0.5	0.8	1.0	1.3	1.7	0.6
Real estate activities	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.5	0.8	1.0	1.3	1.6	1.9	0.8
Professional, scientific, and technical activities	-0.1	-0.1	0.1	0.3	0.6	0.8	1.1	1.4	1.8	0.7
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	-0.1	-0.1	-0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.1
Education	3.2	7.4	11.2	15.2	19.2	23.3	27.4	31.7	35.9	19.4
Human health and social work	-0.6	-1.3	-2.0	-2.7	-3.4	-4.0	-4.6	-5.2	-5.6	-3.3
Arts, entertainment, and recreation & Other service activities	-0.3	-0.6	-0.6	-0.5	-0.4	-0.1	0.3	0.8	1.4	0.0
All Services, Except Education	-0.1	-0.1	0.1	0.2	0.5	0.7	1.0	1.4	1.8	0.6

Source: Results from the Maldives CGE Model

Fiscal Effects

The fiscal effect is a combination of what happens to the economy and government spending. Government is increasing its total spending because of the Education Sector Plan. Because that plan is creating growth, government revenue is also increasing. The increase in government revenue is higher than increase in its spending. Thus, the effect on government revenue triggered by the growth of the economy will compensate the expenditure side of government. The Plan can therefore sustain itself because the money government is putting on the plan, can be recovered from the growing economy. The difference between the Plan and Baseline scenarios on the impact on government revenue, expenditure and savings is given in Table 10.

Table 10: Change in Government Revenue, Expenditure, and Saving; Variation Between Plan and Baseline Scenarios (Percentage)

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Average
Total Expenditures	1.6	3.2	5.0	7.0	9.2	11.5	14.1	17.0	20.1	9.8
Total Revenues	1.7	3.3	5.0	7.0	9.2	11.7	14.7	18.1	22.1	10.3

Budget Balance, Ratio to GDP 2018	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.4
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Source: Results from the Maldives CGE Model

Effects on Households

Table 11 shows that the effect on households is positive, in general. Table 12 gives the difference in the impact on household consumption between the Plan and Baseline scenarios, across household income groups. The last column of Table 12, which gives the average difference between the two scenarios over the nine-year period under analysis, shows that consumption expenditure for the middle-income household groups (decile 2 to decile 4) is more under the Plan compared to the Baseline scenario. However, consumption spending by the poorest household group (decile 1) and the richest household group (decile 5) is lower under the Plan relative to the Baseline scenario. The net effect of these changes in consumption across household groups is explained below.

Table 11: Household Income, Consumption, and Saving; Variation Between Plan and Baseline Scenarios (Percentage)

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Average
Income	-0.2	-0.2	-0.1	-0.1	0.1	0.2	0.4	0.7	1.0	0.2
Consumption	-0.2	-0.2	-0.2	-0.1	0.0	0.2	0.3	0.5	0.8	0.1
Saving	-0.3	-0.3	-0.2	-0.1	0.1	0.3	0.5	0.8	1.2	0.2

Source: Results from the Maldives CGE Model

Table 12: Household Consumption by Household Group; Variation Between Plan and Baseline Scenarios (Percentage)

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Average
Decile 1	-0.4	-0.5	-0.6	-0.6	-0.5	-0.3	-0.1	0.2	0.6	-0.2
Decile 2	-0.3	-0.3	-0.3	-0.2	0.0	0.6	0.5	0.9	1.3	0.2
Decile 3	0.0	0.1	0.3	0.6	0.9	1.3	1.6	2.1	2.6	1.1
Decile 4	-0.2	0.0	0.0	0.2	-0.9	0.8	1.1	1.5	2.0	0.5
Decile 5	-0.3	-0.4	-0.3	-0.3	-0.3	-0.3	-0.1	0.0	0.2	-0.2

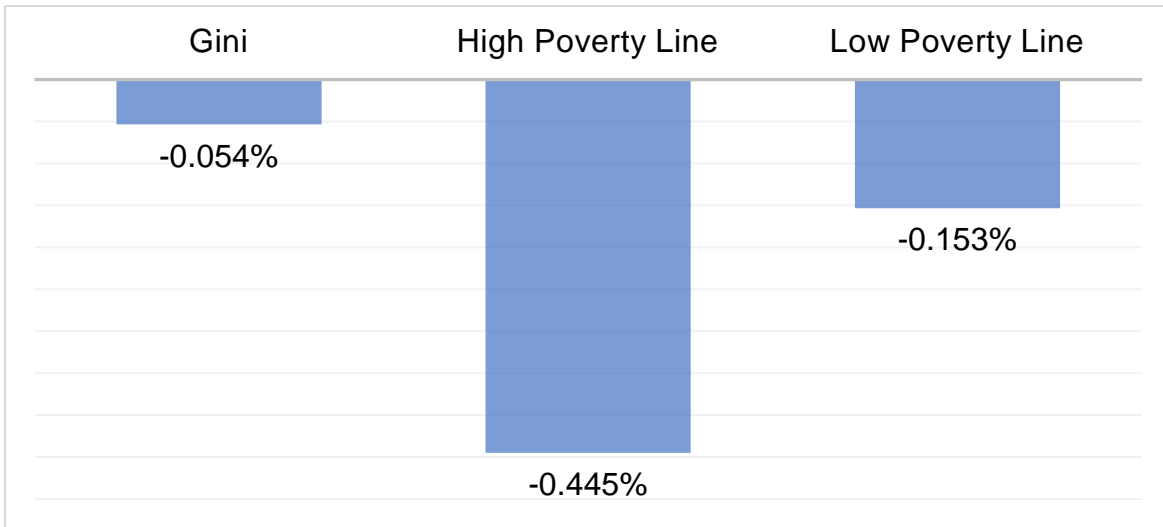
Source: Results from the Maldives CGE Model

Poverty and Inequality Results

The low and high 2016 national poverty lines in Maldives are MVR 74 and MVR 148, respectively. The low poverty line is set at half the median of total expenditure and the high poverty line is set at the median of total expenditure. It is on the same basis on which the 2019 low and poverty lines are calculated using the 2019 HIES. The poverty measurements are then computed using the Foster–Greer–Thorbecke (FGT) indices.

Table 12 shows that consumption for deciles 2 to 4 increases while that of decile 5, the richest household group, falls under the Plan scenario in comparison to the Baseline scenario. Even though income for decile 1 also falls under the Plan relative to the Baseline, the overall impact across all households is a reduction in inequality. The distributional analysis shows a decline in inequality as evidenced by the Gini coefficient falling by 0.054 percent more under the Plan scenario relative to the Baseline scenario. This is shown in Figure 3.

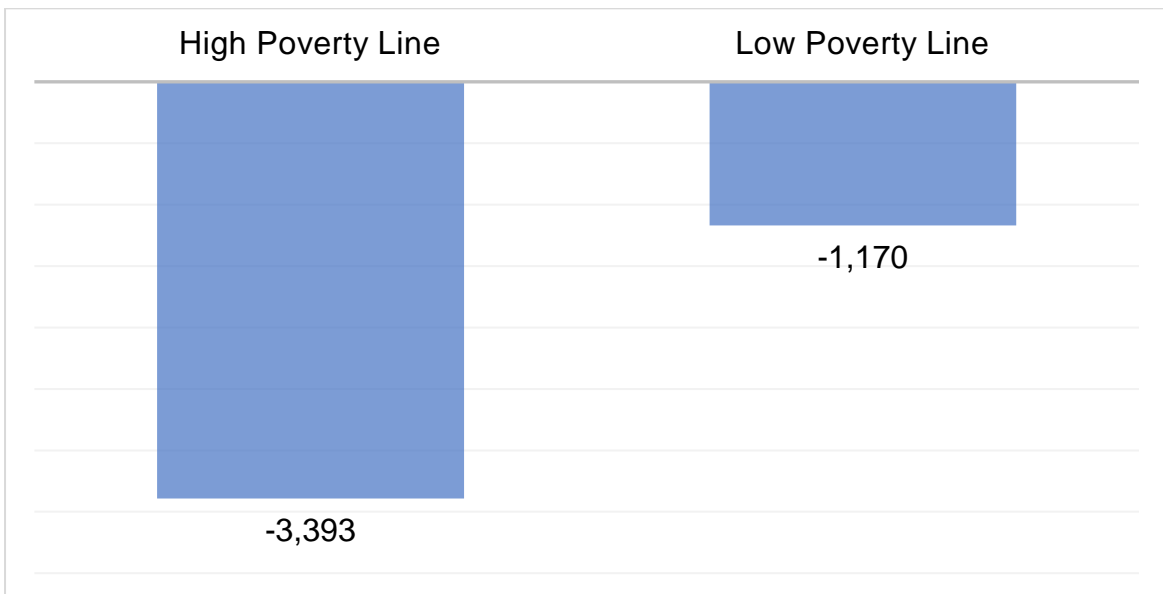
Figure 3: Changes in Gini coefficient and Poverty Headcount comparing Plan to Baseline Scenarios



Source: Results from the Maldives Microsimulation Model

Investment in education contributes to people becoming more skilled and more productive as shown in Table 8. As a result, they earn more, and their income and consumption increase progressively. All these changes have a positive impact on poverty reduction. As expected, poverty declines. Figure 3 shows that poverty declines more by 0.445 percent and 0.153 percent based on the high poverty line and low poverty line, respectively, under the Plan compared to the baseline scenario. These changes translate into 3,393 people and 1,170 people more moving out of poverty using the high poverty and low poverty lines, respectively between the Plan and the Baseline scenarios (Figure 4). Investing in education through the ESP facilitates people to improve their skills and have higher earnings which enables them to spend more. With the implementation of the ESP, people move from low skill levels and medium skill levels to medium skills and high skills levels, respectively; thus, resulting in more people crossing the higher poverty line. The impact is lower for households in low poverty line because the composition and level of current education of households in the low poverty line that limits benefits of investment in vocational education.

Figure 4: Changes in Number of Poor comparing Plan to Baseline Scenario



Source: Results from the Maldives Microsimulation Model

Conclusion

The analysis of projections of public spending on education in Maldives using CGE modelling shows that the Education Sector Plan has an important impact in the economy and across sectors as compared to the Baseline scenario. The implementation of the Education Sector Plan results in an acceleration in the skilling of the population with 2.7 percent of high-skilled and 1.3 percent of medium-skilled more on average than with the Baseline scenario over the period 2019-2027. The Plan similarly increases labour productivity by 1 percentage point more than the Baseline scenario. The micro-simulations show overall positive impact in poverty and income inequality.

List of Acronyms

CGE: Computable general equilibrium
ESP: Education Sector Plan
NTA: National Transfer Accounts
VET: Vocational Education Training
SAM: Social Accounting Matrix

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Annex 5: Mapping of system leverage points to SDG and Strategic Action Plan targets

(Excel files provided separately)

System Element	SAP Pillar	SDG Targets Aligned with this Element	SDG Target Indicators	SAP Target Alignment
Air & Sea transport Infrastructure & Services	Blue Economy	<p>9.1 Develop quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including regional and trans-border infrastructure, to support economic development and human well-being, with a focus on affordable and equitable access for all</p> <p>11.2 By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older person</p>	<p>11.2.1 Proportion of population that has convenient access to public transport, by sex, age and persons with disabilities</p>	<p>Target 2.4: By 2023, at least 3 marina and 1 cruise ship terminal are operational</p> <p>Target 3.1: By 2022, Gulhifalhu Port is fully completed and operational</p> <p>Target 3.1: By 2023, standards established on ensuring physical accessibility of the elderly in transportation facilities and premises are fully enforced</p> <p>BE Target 3.3: By 2023, key infrastructure development for 2 RUCs in line with National Spatial Plan are fully completed</p>
Availability and access to finance (Incentives, Stimulus program, lending, etc)	Blue Economy	<p>8.3 Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services</p> <p>8.10 Strengthen the capacity of domestic financial institutions to encourage and expand access to banking, insurance and financial services for all</p> <p>9.3 Increase the access of small-scale industrial and other enterprises, in particular in developing countries, to financial services, including affordable credit, and their integration into value chains and markets</p>	<p>8.3.1 Proportion of informal employment in total employment, by sector and sex</p> <p>9.3.2 Proportion of small-scale industries with a loan or line of credit</p> <p>8.10.1 (a) Number of commercial bank branches per 100,000 adults and (b) number of automated teller machines (ATMs) per 100,000 adults</p> <p>8.10.2 Proportion of adults (15 years and older) with an account at a bank or other financial institution or with a mobile-money-service provider</p>	<p>BE Target 1.2: By 2023, at least 1,500 farmers & 10 agricultural enterprises including 300 women benefited from the loan scheme</p> <p>BE Target 2.2: Between 2019 and 2023, at least 10 SMEs benefit from the CGS programmes annually</p> <p>BE Target 2.3: By 2021, 40% of SDFC loan portfolio is allocated to women, youth and PWDs</p> <p>BE Target 2.1: By 2023, 120 micro enterprises, 720 small enterprises and 360 medium enterprises benefits from SDFC</p> <p>BE Target 5.1 By 2023, SDFC maintains a repayment rate of 92%</p> <p>Be Target 6.2: By 2023, at least MVR 50 million is disbursed as loans to small scale fishery businesses (SMEs)</p> <p>BE Target 6.2: By 2023, at least MVR 50 million is disbursed as loans to small scale fishery businesses (SMEs)</p> <p>CS Target 5.1: By 2023, at least 250 Loans provided to vulnerable groups / individuals</p>
Availability and Quality of Natural Resources	Jazeera Dhiruilhun	<p>14.2 By 2020, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience, and take action for their restoration in order to achieve healthy and productive oceans</p> <p>15.1 By 2020, ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands, in line with obligations under international agreements</p> <p>15.5 Take urgent and significant action to reduce the degradation of natural habitats, halt the loss of biodiversity and, by 2020, protect and prevent the extinction of threatened species</p>	<p>14.2.1 Proportion of national exclusive economic zones managed using ecosystem-based approaches</p> <p>15.1.2 Proportion of important sites for terrestrial and freshwater biodiversity that are covered by protected areas, by ecosystem type</p> <p>15.5.1 Red List Index</p>	<p>JD Target 2.1: By 2023, at least 7 of the 15 designated National Coral Reef Monitoring sites are monitored and status of coral reef ecosystems are published annually</p> <p>JD Target 1.1: By 2020, integrate environmental protection and biodiversity conservation with the guidelines, regulations and compliance documents on land use planning, local developments planning, building and all infrastructure development projects</p>
Business support services (BCs, BCCs)	Blue Economy	<p>8.2 Achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, including through a focus on high-value added and labour-intensive sectors</p>	<p>8.2.1 Annual growth rate of real GDP per employed person</p>	<p>BE Target 1.1: By 2023, 80% of business services provided from the Ministry of Economic Development are provided online</p> <p>BE Target 1.2: By 2023, 60% of registered SMEs have received a business-related training</p>
Capital Investment (PSIP)	Blue Economy	<p>9.a Facilitate sustainable and resilient infrastructure development in developing countries through enhanced financial, technological and technical support to African countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States</p>	<p>9.a.1 Total official international support (official development assistance plus other official flows) to infrastructure</p>	<p>BE Target 2.2: By 2023, at least 3 strategic infrastructure projects are funded by FDI</p> <p>BE Target 2.1: By 2023, at least 2 Investment Promotion and Protection Agreements are implemented with 2 partners</p> <p>JD Target 2.3: By 2020, a standard mechanism to foster private sector investment in the water and sanitation sector will be in effect</p> <p>JD Target 6.2: By 2023, at least USD 10 million new private investments leveraged for low emission and adaptation measure</p>
Commercial Scale Agriculture	Blue Economy	<p>2.4 By 2030, ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, that help maintain ecosystems, that strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters and that progressively improve land and soil quality</p> <p>6.4 By 2030, substantially increase water-use efficiency across all sectors and ensure sustainable withdrawals and supply of freshwater to address water scarcity and substantially reduce the number of people suffering from water scarcity</p> <p>8.2 Achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, including through a focus on high-value added and labour-intensive sectors</p>	<p>2.3.1 Volume of production per labour unit by classes of farming/pastoral/forestry enterprise size</p> <p>2.3.2 Average income of small-scale food producers, by sex and indigenous status</p> <p>6.4.1 Change in water-use efficiency over time</p> <p>6.4.2 Level of water stress: freshwater withdrawal as a proportion of available freshwater resources</p> <p>8.2.1 Annual growth rate of real GDP per employed person</p>	<p>BE Target 1.1: By 2023, 01 Agricultural Market established in Greater Male' Region; 02 Regional Agricultural Markets established; and Agri-boat operational in 03 regions covering 07 atolls</p> <p>BE Target 2.1: By 2023, at least 02 Urban Gardening Plots (ready for commercial sale) established in each population hub</p> <p>BE Target 3.1: By 2023, IPM Guidelines are fully implemented in at least 50 agricultural islands</p> <p>BE Target 3.2: By 2023, 50 islands received training in homebased hydroponics systems and sustainable irrigation technologies</p> <p>BE Target 3.3: By 2023, 05 Coconut based Agroforestry systems will be developed and modelled in Agricultural Centre</p> <p>BE Target 1.5: By 2023, sustainable production standards are introduced for key industries (tourism, fisheries and construction)</p> <p>BE Target 1.2: By 2023, at least 1,500 farmers & 10 agricultural enterprises including 300 women benefited from the loan scheme</p> <p>BE Target 1.3: By 2023, 02 Agri-centres will be developed; 04 Commercial Poultry Farms, 03 Commercial Goat Farms and 10 agri-farms are operational</p>

Construction	Blue Economy	<p>8.4 Improve progressively, through 2030, global resource efficiency in consumption and production and endeavour to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation, in accordance with the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production, with developed countries taking the lead</p> <p>9.4 By 2030, upgrade infrastructure and retrofit industries to make them sustainable, with increased resource-use efficiency and greater adoption of clean and environmentally sound technologies and industrial processes, with all countries taking action in accordance with their respective capabilities</p>	<p>8.4.1 Material footprint, material footprint per capita, and material footprint per GDP</p> <p>8.4.2 Domestic material consumption, domestic material consumption per capita, and domestic material consumption per GDP</p> <p>9.4.1 CO2 emission per unit of value added</p>	<p>BE Target 1.5: By 2023, sustainable production standards are introduced for key industries (tourism, fisheries and construction)</p> <p>BE Target 3.3: By 2023, key infrastructure development for 2 RUCs in line with National Spatial Plan are fully completed</p>
Coverage of Terrestrial and Marine Protected Areas	Jazeera Dhiriulhun	14.5 By 2020, conserve at least 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, consistent with national and international law and based on the best available scientific information	<p>14.5.1 Coverage of protected areas in relation to marine areas</p> <p>15.1.2 Proportion of important sites for terrestrial and freshwater biodiversity that are covered by protected areas, by ecosystem type</p>	<p>JD Target 2.1: By 2023, a comprehensive and functional protected areas system in the Maldives in accordance with the international standards is established</p> <p>JD Target 2.3: By 2023, at least 10% of coral reef area, 20% of wetlands and mangroves and at least one sand bank and one uninhabited island from each atoll are under some form of protection and management</p>
Current account deficit/surplus	Jazeera Dhiriulhun	17.4 Assist developing countries in attaining long-term debt sustainability through coordinated policies aimed at fostering debt financing, debt relief and debt restructuring, as appropriate, and address the external debt of highly indebted poor countries to reduce debt distress	17.4.1 Debt service as a proportion of exports of goods and services	N/A
Decentralisation	Jazeera Dhiriulhun Thematic Area	<p>11.b By 2020, substantially increase the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters, and develop and implement, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, holistic disaster risk management at all levels</p> <p>16.7 Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels</p>	<p>11.b.1 Number of countries that adopt and implement national disaster risk reduction strategies in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030</p> <p>11.b.2 Proportion of local governments that adopt and implement local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with national disaster risk reduction strategies</p> <p>16.7.2 Proportion of population who believe decision-making is inclusive and responsive, by sex, age, disability and population group</p>	DF Target 1.1: By 2023, all councils have operationalized mechanisms to include the participation of men and women in the design of development projects and during the local development planning
Digital connectivity, technology and digital literacy	Jazeera Dhiriulhun	<p>9.b Support domestic technology development, research and innovation in developing countries, including by ensuring a conducive policy environment for, inter alia, industrial diversification and value addition to commodities</p> <p>9.c Significantly increase access to information and communications technology and strive to provide universal and affordable access to the Internet in least developed countries by 2020</p> <p>5.b Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women</p>	<p>9.b.1 Proportion of medium and high-tech industry value added in total value added</p> <p>9.c.1 Proportion of population covered by a mobile network, by technology</p>	<p>BE Target 1.1: By 2023, 80% of business services provided from the Ministry of Economic Development are provided online</p> <p>BE Target 4.2: By 2023, at least 5 tech start ups are supported in each of the fields; hospitality, fisheries, marine sciences, and the health sector</p> <p>JD Target 4.3: By 2023, at least 2 facilities exist for providing training on Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning and on emerging technologies</p> <p>JD Target 4.1: By 2023, at least 3 technology centres that act as incubators for start-ups, maker spaces for children and youth, with co-working spaces are operational</p> <p>CS Target 1.5: By 2023, e-learning services are made accessible in all islands</p> <p>CS Target 2.3: By 2023, all schools have student friendly ICT infrastructure</p> <p>CS Target 2.4: By 2023, 80% TRCs are upgraded with human resource and with ICT infrastructure</p>
Ease of doing business (registration, licensing, custom procedures, etc)	Blue Economy	8.2 Achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, including through a focus on high-value added and labour-intensive sectors	8.2.1 Annual growth rate of real GDP per employed person	<p>Target 1.1: By 2023, 80% of business services provided from the Ministry of Economic Development are provided online</p> <p>Target 1.2: By 2022, time spent for processing import and export transactions reduced by 25% compared to 2018 levels</p>
Economic Diversification	Blue Economy Thematic Area	8.2 Achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, including through a focus on high-value added and labour-intensive sectors	8.2.1 Annual growth rate of real GDP per employed person	<p>BE Target 3.2: By 2023, at least 3 of the Regional Urban Centres have a marketplace for local products</p> <p>BE Target 4.2: By 2023, a fully integrated shopping zone exists in at least 1 location in the country</p> <p>BE Target 4.3: By 2023, at least 75 fishery-based SMEs received training on financial management and entrepreneurship development</p> <p>BE Target 5.1: By 2023, an economic feasibility study exists for the</p>

Economic Policy and Regulatory Framework, Institutions and Mechanisms	Blue Economy	<p>8.3 Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services</p>	<p>8.3.1 Proportion of informal employment in total employment, by sector and sex</p>	<p>CS Target 2.3: By 2023, 500 vulnerable youth received higher education scholarships and/or loans BE Target 3.3: By 2023, skills programmes offered by TVET are streamlined to meet the needs of industries and support economic diversification BE Target 4.1: By 2023, at least 30,000 benefited from the Tourism Training Fund DF Target 3.2: By 2023, at least 40% of TVET graduates are young people of a vulnerable status GG Target 3.3: By 2023, at least 50% of entrepreneurship trainees at the BDCs are women CS Target 2.3: By 2023, 500 vulnerable youth received higher education scholarships and/or loans BE Target 3.3: By 2023, skills programmes offered by TVET are streamlined to meet the needs of industries and support economic diversification BE Target 3.1: By 2023, at least 2 new training programmes exist on marine resource management BE Target 4.1: By 2023, at least 30,000 benefited from the Tourism Training Fund BE Target 4.2: By 2023, at least 5 targeted training events conducted for disadvantaged groups in fishing communities BE Target 4.3: By 2023, at least 75 fishery-based SMEs received training on financial management and entrepreneurship development DF Target 3.2: By 2023, at least 40% of TVET graduates are young people of a vulnerable status GG Target 3.3: By 2023, at least 50% of entrepreneurship trainees at the BDCs are women</p>
Educated & Skilled Workforce	Jazeera Dhiriiulhun	<p>4.4 By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship</p>	<p>4.4.1 Proportion of youth and adults with information and communications technology (ICT) skills, by type of skill</p>	<p>CS Target 2.3: By 2023, 500 vulnerable youth received higher education scholarships and/or loans BE Target 3.3: By 2023, skills programmes offered by TVET are streamlined to meet the needs of industries and support economic diversification BE Target 3.1: By 2023, at least 2 new training programmes exist on marine resource management BE Target 4.1: By 2023, at least 30,000 benefited from the Tourism Training Fund BE Target 4.2: By 2023, at least 5 targeted training events conducted for disadvantaged groups in fishing communities BE Target 4.3: By 2023, at least 75 fishery-based SMEs received training on financial management and entrepreneurship development DF Target 3.2: By 2023, at least 40% of TVET graduates are young people of a vulnerable status GG Target 3.3: By 2023, at least 50% of entrepreneurship trainees at the BDCs are women</p>
Environmental Impacts on air, water, land, sea, biodiversity, etc	Jazeera Dhiriiulhun	<p>6.3 By 2030, improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and materials, halving the proportion of untreated wastewater and substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse globally 11.6 By 2030, reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality and municipal and other waste management 12.5 By 2030, substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse 14.1 By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution. 15.8 By 2020, introduce measures to prevent the introduction and significantly reduce the impact of invasive alien species on land and water ecosystems and control or eradicate the priority species</p>	<p>6.3.1 Proportion of wastewater safely treated 11.6.1 Proportion of urban solid waste regularly collected and with adequate final discharge out of total urban solid waste generated, by cities. 11.6.2 Annual mean levels of fine particulate matter (e.g. PM2.5 and PM10) in cities (population weighted) 12.5.1 National Recycling Rate, tons of material recycled 14.1.1 Index of coastal eutrophication and floating plastic debris density 15.8.1 Proportion of countries adopting relevant national legislation and adequately resourcing the prevention or control of invasive alien species</p>	<p>JD Target 1.1: By 2020, integrate environmental protection and biodiversity conservation with the guidelines, regulations and compliance documents on land use planning, local developments planning, building and all infrastructure development projects JD Target 1.3: By 2023, a comprehensive legislation on chemicals management is enacted covering the entire lifecycle of chemicals Target 1.5: By 2023, sustainable production standards are introduced for key industries (tourism, fisheries and construction) JD Target 5.1: By 2023, water resource conservation and management plans are implemented in all islands Target 5.2: By 2023, user pay principle is mainstreamed and integrated into policies and regulations concerning utilisation of biodiversity resources and ecosystem services Target 1.3: By 2023, three Regional Waste Management and Treatment Facilities (RWMFs) is developed across the Maldives in line with the National Spatial Plan Target 1.4: By 2023, a National Recycling Strategy is developed and implemented for plastics, metals, glass and other recyclables Target 5.3: By 2022, accurate and regular air pollution data are available to public on a real time basis</p>
Environmental Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting	Jazeera Dhiriiulhun	<p>14.a Increase scientific knowledge, develop research capacity and transfer marine technology, taking into account the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission Criteria and Guidelines on the Transfer of Marine Technology, in order to improve ocean health and to enhance the contribution of marine biodiversity to the development of developing countries, in particular small island developing States and least developed countries</p>	<p>14.a.1 Proportion of total research budget allocated to research in the field of marine technology</p>	<p>JD Target 3.1: By 2023, establish an evidence-based monitoring system to track the status of key ecosystems, species, and genetic diversity as well as protected areas and species found in the Maldives JD Target 5.1: By 2023, an up-to-date database on biodiversity and ecosystems of Maldives is institutionalised and is utilised for conservation, monitoring and enforcement BE Target 6.2: By 2020, a web-enabled fisheries database to manage and monitor research permits is implemented BE Target 1.1: By 2023, at least 4 fishery management plans are implemented</p>
Environmental Policy and regulation	Jazeera Dhiriiulhun	<p>12.4 By 2020, achieve the environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes throughout their life cycle, in accordance with agreed international frameworks, and significantly reduce their release to air, water and soil in order to minimize their adverse impacts on human health and the environment 14.4 By 2020, effectively regulate harvesting and end overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and destructive fishing practices and implement science-based management plans, in order to restore fish stocks in the shortest time feasible, at least to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield as determined by their biological characteristics</p>	<p>12.4.1 Number of parties to international multilateral environmental agreements on hazardous waste, and other chemicals that meet their commitments and obligations in transmitting information as required by each relevant agreement 12.4.2 (a) Hazardous waste generated per capita; and (b) proportion of hazardous waste treated, by type of treatment 14.4.1 Proportion of fish stocks within biologically sustainable levels</p>	<p>BE Target 1.5: By 2023, sustainable production standards are introduced for key industries (tourism, fisheries and construction) JD Target 1.3: By 2023, a comprehensive legislation on chemicals management is enacted covering the entire lifecycle of chemicals JD Target 2.1: By 2023, a comprehensive and functional protected areas system in the Maldives in accordance with the international standards is established JD Target 2.3: By 2023, at least 10% of coral reef area, 20% of wetlands and mangroves and at least one sand bank and one uninhabited island from each atoll are under some form of protection and management</p>

FDI and domestic investment	Blue Economy	<p>17.3 Mobilize additional financial resources for developing countries from multiple sources</p>	<p>17.3.1 Foreign direct investment (FDI), official development assistance and South-South cooperation as a proportion of total domestic budget</p>	<p>BE Target 5.1: By 2023, taxpayer confidence in the tax administration improved by 20% compared to 2018 levels BE Target 5.2: By 2020, income tax is collected in the Maldives JD Target 2.3: By 2020, a standard mechanism to foster private sector investment in the water and sanitation sector will be in effect JD Target 6.1: By 2023, at least USD 50 million is mobilised through direct access modality JD Target 6.2: By 2023, at least USD 10 million new private investments leveraged for low emission and adaptation measures BE Target 1.5: By 2023, sustainable production standards are introduced for key industries (tourism, fisheries and construction) BE Target 5.3: By 2023, at least 75% of fishery businesses benefited from 'Fahi Hakatha' – scheme for administering diesel duty exemption BE Target 6.2: By 2023, at least MVR 50 million is disbursed as loans to small scale fishery businesses (SMEs) BE Target 6.1: By 2021, value-adding facilities established, and new value addition of fish and fishery products piloted in at least 5 RUCs in line with the National Spatial Plan BE Target 1.1: By 2023, at least 4 fishery management plans are implemented BE Target 1.2: By 2023, MMRI has produced at least 3 scientific reviews of key fisheries that would feed into formulation of the management plans BE Target 1.3: By 2023, the number of licensed vessels with VMS system increased by at least 25% BE Target 3.1: By 2023, at least 2 new training programmes exist on marine resource management BE Target 5.1: By 2023, an economic feasibility study exists for the establishment of live bait as a separate fishery Target 7.1: By 2023, a multi-species hatchery exists with capacity to cater to at least 50 grow-out farmers Target 7.2: By 2023, at least 3 accredited training courses on aquaculture offered at Maniyafushi Training and Demonstration Facility Target 7.3: By 2020, the Aquatic Animal Health Laboratory is operational with diagnostic services</p>
Fisheries	Blue Economy	<p>8.2 Achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, including through a focus on high-value added and labour-intensive sectors 12.6 Encourage companies, especially large and transnational companies, to adopt sustainable practices and to integrate sustainability information into their reporting cycle 14.4 By 2020, effectively regulate harvesting and end overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and destructive fishing practices and implement science-based management plans, in order to restore fish stocks in the shortest time feasible, at least to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield as determined by their biological characteristics 14.7 By 2030, increase the economic benefits to small island developing States and least developed countries from the sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable management of fisheries, aquaculture and tourism 14.b Provide access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets</p>	<p>8.2.1 Annual growth rate of real GDP per employed person 12.6.1 Number of companies publishing sustainability reports 14.4.1 Proportion of fish stocks within biologically sustainable levels 14.7.1 Sustainable fisheries as a proportion of GDP in small island developing States, least developed countries and all countries 14.b.1 Degree of application of a legal/regulatory/policy/institutional framework which recognizes and protects access rights for small-scale fisheries</p>	
Government access to international finance	Blue Economy	<p>17.3 Mobilize additional financial resources for developing countries from multiple sources 17.5 Adopt and implement investment promotion regimes for least developed countries</p>	<p>17.3.1 Foreign direct investment (FDI), official development assistance and South-South cooperation as a proportion of total domestic budget</p>	<p>JD Target 2.3: By 2020, a standard mechanism to foster private sector investment in the water and sanitation sector will be in effect JD Target 6.1: By 2023, at least USD 50 million is mobilised through direct access modality JD Target 6.2: By 2023, at least USD 10 million new private investments leveraged for low emission and adaptation measures</p>
Government Revenue (Tax and non-tax revenue)	Jazeera Dhirulhun	<p>17.1 Strengthen domestic resource mobilization, including through international support to developing countries, to improve domestic capacity for tax and other revenue collection</p>	<p>17.1.1 Total government revenue as a proportion of GDP, by source 17.1.2 Proportion of domestic budget funded by domestic taxes</p>	<p>BE Target 5.1: By 2023, taxpayer confidence in the tax administration improved by 20% compared to 2018 levels BE Target 5.2: By 2020, income tax is collected in the Maldives</p>
International trade (import/export)	Blue Economy	<p>17.11 Significantly increase the exports of developing countries, in particular with a view to doubling the least developed countries' share of global exports by 2020</p>	<p>17.11.1 Developing countries' and least developed countries' share of global exports</p>	<p>BE Target 1.2: By 2022, time spent for processing import and export transactions reduced by 25% compared to 2018 levels BE Target 1.3: From 2022 onwards, trade transaction costs reduced by 10% compared to 2018 levels BE Target 2.1: By 2023, at least 2 Investment Promotion and Protection Agreements are implemented with 2 partners BE Target 3.2: By 2023, Velana International Airport is ranked as one of the top airports in South Asia BE Target 3.1: By 2022, Gulhifalhu Port is fully completed and operational</p>
Investment confidence	Blue Economy	<p>8.1 Sustain per capita economic growth in accordance with national circumstances and, in particular, at least 7 per cent gross domestic product growth per annum in the least developed countries 17.5 Adopt and implement investment promotion regimes for least developed countries</p>	<p>8.1.1 Annual growth rate of real GDP per capita 17.5.1 Number of countries that adopt and implement investment promotion regimes for developing countries, including the least developed countries</p>	<p>JD Target 2.3: By 2020, a standard mechanism to foster private sector investment in the water and sanitation sector will be in effect JD Target 6.1: By 2023, at least USD 50 million is mobilised through direct access modality JD Target 6.2: By 2023, at least USD 10 million new private investments leveraged for low emission and adaptation measures</p>

Level of community participation in decision making	Dignified Families	<p>16.7 Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels</p>	<p>16.7.2 Proportion of population who believe decision-making is inclusive and responsive, by sex, age, disability and population group</p>	<p>DF Target 1.1: By 2023, all councils have operationalized mechanisms to include the participation of men and women in the design of development projects and during the local development planning</p> <p>JD Target 3.1: By 2023, all councils conduct town hall meetings at least thrice a year</p> <p>BE Target 5.1: By end of 2021, all tourism related regulations are revised based on consultations with industry relevant stakeholders</p> <p>GG Target 2.1: By 2023, 75% of the bills passed by the Parliament incorporates feedback from citizens</p> <p>GG Target 2.2: By 2021, An active mechanism exists for petitions submitted to parliament with more than 500 signatures to discuss and vote in the parliament</p> <p>GG Target 2.3: By 2023, Maldives joins Open Government Partnership (OPG)</p> <p>Target 3.2: By 2023, at least 40% of TVET graduates are young people of a vulnerable status</p> <p>Target 3.3: By 2023, voluntary youth unemployment is reduced by 10% from 2018 levels</p> <p>BE Target 3.2: By 2023, at least 25% of employees working in the tourism sector are female</p> <p>BE Target 1.1: By 2020, minimum wage is implemented</p> <p>BE Target 2.1: By 2023, job security provisions are enforced in the Employment Act</p> <p>BE Target 2.2: By 2023, occupational health and safety standards are systematically monitored in fisheries, health, construction and tourism sectors</p> <p>BE Target 2.3: By 2023, Industrial Relations Act is enacted</p> <p>BE Target 3.1: By 2023, at least 10,000 people benefited from employment support services of the job centres</p> <p>BE Target 3.2: By 2023, career portal utilised by 10,000 of users</p>
Livelihood and employment opportunities	Dignified Families	<p>8.5 By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value</p> <p>8.6 By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training</p>	<p>8.5.2 Unemployment rate, by sex, age and persons with disabilities</p> <p>8.5.1 Average hourly earnings of female and male employees, by occupation, age and persons with disabilities</p> <p>8.6.1 Proportion of youth (aged 15–24 years) not in education, employment or training</p>	<p>Target 3.2: By 2023, at least 40% of TVET graduates are young people of a vulnerable status</p> <p>Target 3.3: By 2023, voluntary youth unemployment is reduced by 10% from 2018 levels</p> <p>BE Target 3.2: By 2023, at least 25% of employees working in the tourism sector are female</p> <p>BE Target 1.1: By 2020, minimum wage is implemented</p> <p>BE Target 2.1: By 2023, job security provisions are enforced in the Employment Act</p> <p>BE Target 2.2: By 2023, occupational health and safety standards are systematically monitored in fisheries, health, construction and tourism sectors</p> <p>BE Target 2.3: By 2023, Industrial Relations Act is enacted</p> <p>BE Target 3.1: By 2023, at least 10,000 people benefited from employment support services of the job centres</p> <p>BE Target 3.2: By 2023, career portal utilised by 10,000 of users</p>
Management & Enforcement of Env. Laws & Regulations	Jazeera Dhiriulhun	<p>12.5 By 2030, substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse</p> <p>14.1 By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution</p> <p>14.2 By 2020, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience, and take action for their restoration in order to achieve healthy and productive oceans</p> <p>14.4 By 2020, effectively regulate harvesting and end overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and destructive fishing practices and implement science-based management plans, in order to restore fish stocks in the shortest time feasible, at least to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield as determined by their biological characteristics</p> <p>15.5 Take urgent and significant action to reduce the degradation of natural habitats, halt the loss of biodiversity and, by 2020, protect and prevent the extinction of threatened species</p>	<p>12.5.1 National Recycling Rate, tons of material recycled.</p> <p>14.1.1 (a) Index of coastal eutrophication; and (b) plastic debris density</p> <p>14.4.1 Proportion of fish stocks within biologically sustainable levels</p> <p>15.5.1 Red List Index</p>	<p>JD Target 1.3: By 2023, a comprehensive legislation on chemicals management is enacted covering the entire lifecycle of chemicals</p> <p>JD Target 1.4: By 2023, a National Recycling Strategy is developed and implemented for plastics, metals, glass and other recyclables</p> <p>JD Target 1.1: By 2020, integrate environmental protection and biodiversity conservation with the guidelines, regulations and compliance documents on land use planning, local developments planning, building and all infrastructure development projects</p> <p>JD Target 2.1: By 2023, a comprehensive and functional protected areas system in the Maldives in accordance with the international standards is established</p> <p>JD Target 2.2: By 2022, a comprehensive reef restoration and protection mechanism under the concept of "Jazeera Island Reef" is introduced and implemented</p> <p>JD Target 3.1: By 2023, establish an evidence-based monitoring system to track the status of key ecosystems, species, and genetic diversity as well as protected areas and species found in the Maldives</p> <p>JD Target 5.1: By 2023, an up-to-date database on biodiversity and ecosystems of Maldives is institutionalised and is utilised for conservation, monitoring and enforcement</p> <p>BE Target 1.1: By 2023, at least 4 fishery management plans are implemented</p> <p>BE Target 3.1: By 2023, at least 2 new training programmes exist</p>
Market access opportunities	Blue Economy	<p>14.b Provide access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets</p> <p>17.11 Significantly increase the exports of developing countries, in particular with a view to doubling the least developed countries' share of global exports by 2020</p>	<p>14.b.1 Degree of application of a legal/regulatory/policy/institutional framework which recognizes and protects access rights for small-scale fisheries</p> <p>17.11.1 Developing countries' and least developed countries' share of global exports</p>	<p>Target 5.3: By 2023, at least 75% of fishery businesses benefited from 'Fahi Hakatha' – scheme for administering diesel duty exemption</p> <p>Target 6.1: By 2021, value-adding facilities established, and new value addition of fish and fishery products piloted in at least 5 RUCs in line with the National Spatial Plan</p>
Migrant workers	Blue Economy	<p>8.8 Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment</p> <p>10.7 Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies</p>	<p>8.8.2 Level of national compliance with labour rights (freedom of association and collective bargaining) based on International Labour Organization (ILO) textual sources and national legislation, by sex and migrant status</p> <p>10.7.1 Recruitment cost borne by employee as a proportion of monthly income earned in country of destination</p> <p>10.7.2 Number of countries with migration policies that facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people</p>	<p>BE Target 2.2: By 2023, occupational health and safety standards are systematically monitored in fisheries, health, construction and tourism sectors</p>

Opportunities for women in business leadership roles	Good Governance	<p>5.5 Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life</p> <p>5.c Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels</p>	<p>5.5.2 Proportion of women in managerial positions</p> <p>5.c.1 Proportion of countries with systems to track and make public allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment</p>	<p>Target 1.3: By 2023, 30% increase in number of registered women-led SMEs</p> <p>Target 4.1: By 2023, all National Associations have at least 33% women in their executive boards/committees</p> <p>GG Target 1.3: By 2023, young male and female representation is achieved in at least 6 government decision making bodies and in at least 5 parliamentary committees</p> <p>Target 3.2: By 2023, at least 25% of employees working in the tourism sector are female</p> <p>Target 3.3: By 2023, at least 50% of entrepreneurship trainees at the BDCs are women</p> <p>Target 1.3: By 2023, 30% increase of registered women-led SMEs</p> <p>Target 3.4: By 2023, at least 50 young women led businesses are supported with technical support and integration to digital marketing platforms</p>
Overall Environmental Health	Jazeera Dhiriulhun	<p>14.2 By 2020, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience, and take action for their restoration in order to achieve healthy and productive oceans</p> <p>15.1 By 2020, ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands, in line with obligations under international agreements</p>	<p>14.2.1 Proportion of national exclusive economic zones managed using ecosystem-based approaches</p> <p>15.1.1 Forest area as a proportion of total land area</p> <p>15.1.2 Proportion of important sites for terrestrial and freshwater biodiversity that are covered by protected areas, by ecosystem type</p>	<p>Target 1.1: By 2020, integrate environmental protection and biodiversity conservation with the guidelines, regulations and compliance documents on land use planning, local developments planning, building and all infrastructure development projects</p> <p>JD Target 2.1: By 2023, a comprehensive and functional protected areas system in the Maldives in accordance with the international standards is established</p> <p>JD Target 2.3: By 2023, at least 10% of coral reef area, 20% of wetlands and mangroves and at least one sand bank and one uninhabited island from each atoll are under some form of protection and management</p>
Poverty Level	Blue Economy	<p>1.2 By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions</p> <p>1.b Create sound policy frameworks at the national, regional and international levels, based on pro-poor and gender-sensitive development strategies, to support accelerated investment in poverty eradication actions</p>	<p>1.2.1 Proportion of population living below the national poverty line, by sex and age</p> <p>1.2.2 Proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions</p> <p>1.b.1 Proportion of government recurrent and capital spending to sectors that disproportionately benefit women, the poor and vulnerable groups</p>	<p>BE Target 1.2: By 2023, at least 1,500 farmers & 10 agricultural enterprises including 300 women benefited from the loan scheme</p> <p>BE Target 6.2: By 2023, at least MVR 50 million is disbursed as loans to small scale fishery businesses (SMEs)</p> <p>BE Target 2.3: By 2021, 40% of SDFC loan portfolio is allocated to women, youth and PWDs</p> <p>CS Target 1.4: By 2023, at least 70% of the most eligible are benefitted from a harmonized social protection mechanism</p> <p>JD Target 2.1: By 2023, at least MVR 2 million disbursed as grants to support local artists and cultural practitioners</p> <p>JD Target 2.2: By 2023, an effective economic model to sustain and develop cultural establishments is designed and implemented</p> <p>JD Target 6.3: By 2023, at least 50 islands offer culture-based tourism services</p> <p>JD Target 1.2: By 2023, at least 500 artists and culture practitioners have utilised Cultural Centres nationwide</p>
Preservation of tradition culture and beliefs	Jazeera Dhiriulhun	<p>11.4 Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage</p>	<p>11.4.1 Total expenditure (public and private) per capita spent on the preservation, protection and conservation of all cultural and natural heritage, by type of heritage (cultural, natural, mixed and World Heritage Centre designation), level of government (national, regional and local/municipal), type of expenditure (operating expenditure/investment) and type of private funding (donations in kind, private non-profit sector and sponsorship)</p>	<p>CS Target 1.4: By 2023, 5 Higher Education and Training facilities in 5 different regions established and operational</p> <p>CS Target 1.3: By 2023, 5 junior colleges in 5 identified regions established and operational</p> <p>CS Target 2.1: By 2023, at least 25,000 students given opportunity to study under the free first-degree scheme</p> <p>CS Target 1.5: By 2023, e-learning services are made accessible in all islands</p>
Quality and Availability of Education (e.g HE, VET, non-formal & Int. student mobility)	Caring State	<p>4.3 By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university</p> <p>4.a Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all</p> <p>4.c By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing States</p>	<p>4.3.1 Participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 months, by sex</p>	<p>CS Target 1.4: By 2023, 5 Higher Education and Training facilities in 5 different regions established and operational</p> <p>CS Target 1.3: By 2023, 5 junior colleges in 5 identified regions established and operational</p> <p>CS Target 2.1: By 2023, at least 25,000 students given opportunity to study under the free first-degree scheme</p> <p>CS Target 1.5: By 2023, e-learning services are made accessible in all islands</p>

Resilience	Dignified Families Thematic Area	<p>1.5 By 2030, build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters</p> <p>11.b By 2020, substantially increase the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters, and develop and implement, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, holistic disaster risk management at all levels</p> <p>13.1 Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries</p>	<p>1.5.1 Number of deaths, missing persons and directly affected persons attributed to disasters per 100,000 population</p> <p>1.5.2 Direct economic loss attributed to disasters in relation to global gross domestic product (GDP)</p> <p>11.b.1 Number of countries that adopt and implement national disaster risk reduction strategies in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030</p> <p>11.b.2 Proportion of local governments that adopt and implement local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with national disaster risk reduction strategies</p> <p>13.1.1 Number of deaths, missing persons and directly affected persons attributed to disasters per 100,000 population</p> <p>13.1.2 Number of countries that adopt and implement national disaster risk reduction strategies in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030</p>	<p>DF Target 1.1: By 2023, all councils have operationalized mechanisms to include the participation of men and women in the design of development projects and during the local development planning</p> <p>DF Target 1.2: By 2023, at least 90% of islands have CSG fully functioning</p>
Resilient Physical Infrastructure (Road, Utility Provision, etc.)	Jazeera Dhiriulhun	<p>9.1 Develop quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including regional and trans-border infrastructure, to support economic development and human well-being, with a focus on affordable and equitable access for all</p> <p>9.a Facilitate sustainable and resilient infrastructure development in developing countries through enhanced financial, technological and technical support to African countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States</p>	<p>9.1.1 Proportion of the rural population who live within 2 km of an all-season road</p> <p>9.a.1 Total official international support (official development assistance plus other official flows) to infrastructure</p>	<p>BE Target 2.4: By 2023, at least 3 marina and 1 cruise ship terminal are operational</p> <p>BE Target 2.2: By 2023, at least 3 strategic infrastructure projects are funded by FDI</p> <p>BE Target 3.3: By 2023, key infrastructure development for 2 RUCs in line with National Spatial Plan are fully completed</p>
SMEs and Social Entrepreneurs	Blue Economy	<p>8.3 Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services</p>	<p>8.3.1 Proportion of informal employment in non-agriculture employment, by sex</p>	<p>BE Target 1.3: By 2023, 30% increase in number of registered women-led SMEs</p> <p>BE Target 3.2: By 2023, at least 50 SMEs adopted green SME initiatives</p> <p>BE Target 2.1: By 2023, 120 micro enterprises, 720 small enterprises and 360 medium enterprises benefits from SDFC</p> <p>BE Target 2.2: Between 2019 and 2023, at least 10 SMEs benefit from the CGS programmes annually</p> <p>BE Target 4.2: By 2023, at least 5 tech starts ups are supported in each of the fields; hospitality, fisheries, marine sciences, and the health sector</p> <p>BE Target 4.3: By 2023, at least 75 fishery-based SMEs received training on financial management and entrepreneurship development</p>
Social Capital	Caring State	<p>17.17 Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships</p>	<p>17.17.1 Amount of United States dollars committed to (a) public-private partnerships and (b) civil society partnerships</p>	<p>DF Target 1.1: By 2023, all councils have operationalized mechanisms to include the participation of men and women in the design of development projects and during the local development planning</p> <p>DF Target 1.2: By 2023, at least 90% of islands have CSG fully functioning</p> <p>DF Target 1.3: By 2023, at least 2 social audits have been carried out in any given inhabited island</p> <p>DF Target 1.4: By 2022, all islands have trained Community Empowerment Officers with 30% women</p> <p>DF Target 1.2: By 2023, at least 90% of islands have CSG fully functioning</p>
Tourism	Blue Economy	<p>8.9 By 2030, devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products</p> <p>12.6 Encourage companies, especially large and transnational companies, to adopt sustainable practices and to integrate sustainability information into their reporting cycle</p> <p>14.7 By 2030, increase the economic benefits to small island developing States and least developed countries from the sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable management of fisheries, aquaculture and tourism</p>	<p>8.9.1 Tourism direct GDP as a proportion of total GDP and in growth rate</p> <p>14.7.1 Sustainable fisheries as a proportion of GDP in small island developing States, least developed countries and all countries</p>	<p>BE Target 1.2: By 2023, partnership agreements exist with at least 5 organisers of global sporting events and 5 environmental organisations</p> <p>BE Target 2.2: By 2023, an effective economic model to sustain and develop cultural establishments is designed and implemented</p> <p>BE Target 3.2: By 2023, at least 3 of the Regional Urban Centres have a marketplace for local products</p> <p>BE Target 5.1: By end of 2021, all tourism related regulations are revised based on consultations with industry relevant stakeholders</p> <p>BE Target 1.5: By 2023, sustainable production standards are introduced for key industries (tourism, fisheries and construction)</p> <p>BE Target 4.1: By 2023, at least 30,000 benefited from the Tourism Training Fund</p> <p>JD Target 2.2: By 2023, an effective economic model to sustain and develop cultural establishments is designed and implemented</p>

System Element	SAP Pillar	SDG Targets Aligned with this Element	SDG Target Indicators	SAP Target Alignment	
Accountability mechanism for all level of government	Good Governance	<p>16.6 Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels</p> <p>16.10 Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements</p>	<p>16.6.1 Primary government expenditures as a proportion of original approved budget, by sector (or by budget codes or similar)</p> <p>16.6.2 Proportion of population satisfied with their last experience of public services</p> <p>16.10.2 Number of countries that adopt and implement constitutional, statutory and/or policy guarantees for public access to information</p>	<p>GG Target 1.2: Parliamentary deliberations accessed by public increased by 10% annually</p> <p>GG Target 1.4: By 2023, Public confidence in parliament increased by 20% compared to 2018</p> <p>GG Target 2.1: By 2023, 75% of the bills passed by the Parliament incorporates feedback from citizens</p> <p>GG Target 2.2: By 2021, An active mechanism exists for petitions submitted to parliament with more than 500 signatures to discuss and vote in the parliament</p> <p>GG Target 2.3: By 2023, Maldives joins Open Government Partnership (OPG)</p> <p>GG Target 4.3: By 2023, Audit reports show that all SOEs conduct procurement in a fair and transparent manner and that corruption and bribery cases are eliminated in SOEs</p> <p>GG Target 5.3: By 2023, Press Freedom Index for Maldives improved by more than 25% compared to 2019 level</p> <p>GG Target 1.2: By 2021, Integrity Officers are active and implementing their roles</p> <p>GG Target 3.1: By 2023, all state institutions utilise and comply fully with the Public Finance Act and guidelines</p> <p>GG Target 4.3: By 2023, Audit reports show that all SOEs conduct</p>	
Availability and Quality of Natural Resources	Jazeera Dhiriluhun	<p>14.2 By 2020, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience, and take action for their restoration in order to achieve healthy and productive oceans</p> <p>14.5 By 2020, conserve at least 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, consistent with national and international law and based on the best available scientific information</p> <p>15.1 By 2020, ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands, in line with obligations under international agreements</p> <p>15.8 By 2020, introduce measures to prevent the introduction and significantly reduce the impact of invasive alien species on land and water ecosystems and control or eradicate the priority species</p>	<p>14.2.1 Number of countries using ecosystem-based approaches to managing marine areas</p> <p>14.5.1 Coverage of protected areas in relation to marine areas</p> <p>15.1.2 Proportion of important sites for terrestrial and freshwater biodiversity that are covered by protected areas, by ecosystem type</p> <p>15.8.1 Proportion of countries adopting relevant national legislation and adequately resourcing the prevention or control of invasive alien species</p>	<p>BE Target 1.1: By 2023, at least 4 fishery management plans are implemented</p> <p>BE Target 2.1: By 2023, at least 7 of the 15 designated National Coral Reef Monitoring sites are monitored and status of coral reef ecosystems are published annually</p> <p>BE Target 2.2: By 2023, at least 1 pilot coral reef rehabilitation programme at a selected site is established by MMRI based on findings of recruitment and connectivity studies</p> <p>JD Target 1.1: By 2020, integrate environmental protection and biodiversity conservation with the guidelines, regulations and compliance documents on land use planning, local developments planning, building and all infrastructure development projects</p> <p>JD Target 2.1: By 2023, a comprehensive and functional protected areas system in the Maldives in accordance with the international standards is established</p> <p>JD Target 2.2: By 2022, a comprehensive reef restoration and protection mechanism under the concept of "Jazeera Island Reef" is introduced and implemented</p> <p>JD Target 2.3: By 2023, at least 10% of coral reef area, 20% of wetlands and mangroves and at least one sand bank and one uninhabited island from each atoll are under some form of</p>	
Availability, Access & Quality Basic Education (K-12)	Caring State	<p>4.1 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes</p> <p>4.2 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education</p> <p>4.6 By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy</p> <p>4.7 By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development</p>	<p>4.1.1 Proportion of children and young people (a) in grades 2/3; (b) at the end of primary; and (c) at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading and (ii) mathematics, by sex</p> <p>4.1.2 Completion rate (primary education, lower secondary education, upper secondary education)</p> <p>4.2.1 Proportion of children aged 24–59 months who are developmentally on track in health, learning and psychosocial well-being, by sex</p> <p>4.2.2 Participation rate in organized learning (one year before the official primary entry age), by sex</p> <p>4.6.1 Proportion of population in a given age group achieving at least a fixed level of proficiency in functional (a) literacy and (b) numeracy skills, by sex</p> <p>4.7.1 Extent to which (i) global citizenship education and (ii) education for sustainable development, including gender equality and human rights, are mainstreamed at all levels in (a) national education policies; (b) curricula; (c) teacher education; and (d) student assessment</p>	<p>CS Target 1.1: By 2023, a robust monitoring mechanism exists to track progress of children at risks</p> <p>CS Target 1.2: By 2023, 100% of identified students with SEN are reached with special education programme</p> <p>CS Target 1.3: By 2023, educational programmes conducted for children with exceptionalities and SEN through early identification, diagnosis and targeted interventions strengthened</p> <p>CS Strategy 1.4: Strengthen safe motherhood and child health and nutrition programmes to build a better foundation for a healthy generation</p> <p>JD Target 6.2: By 2023, school curriculum to teach students and teachers the value of biodiversity, biosafety and sustainability revised</p>	
Capital Investments	Blue Economy	<p>17.5 Adopt and implement investment promotion regimes for least developed countries</p>	<p>17.5.1 Number of countries that adopt and implement investment promotion regimes for developing countries, including the least developed countries</p>	<p>BE Target 2.2: By 2023, at least 3 strategic infrastructure projects are funded by FDI</p> <p>JD Target 6.2: By 2023, at least USD 10 million new private investments leveraged for low emission and adaptation measures</p>	
Central & Local Government Management	Budget & Fiscal	Good Governance	<p>16.6 Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels</p> <p>17.1 Strengthen domestic resource mobilization, including through international support to developing countries, to improve domestic capacity for tax and other revenue collection</p>	<p>16.6.1 Primary government expenditures as a proportion of original approved budget, by sector (or by budget codes or similar)</p> <p>17.1.1 Total government revenue as a proportion of GDP, by source</p> <p>17.1.2 Proportion of domestic budget funded by domestic taxes</p>	<p>BE Target 5.1: By 2023, taxpayer confidence in the tax administration improved by 20% compared to 2018 levels</p> <p>BE Target 5.2: By 2020, income tax is collected in the Maldives</p>

Community Engagement Mechanism & Supporting Resources	Good Governance	<p>11.3 By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries</p> <p>16.7 Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels</p>	<p>11.3.2 Proportion of cities with a direct participation structure of civil society in urban planning and management that operate regularly and democratically</p> <p>16.7.2 Proportion of population who believe decision making is inclusive and responsive, by sex, age, disability and population group</p>	<p>DF Target 1.1: By 2023, all councils have operationalized mechanisms to include the participation of men and women in the design of development projects and during the local development planning</p> <p>JD Target 3.1: By 2023, all councils conduct town hall meetings at least thrice a year</p> <p>BE Target 5.1: By end of 2021, all tourism related regulations are revised based on consultations with industry relevant stakeholders</p> <p>GG Target 2.1: By 2023, 75% of the bills passed by the Parliament incorporates feedback from citizens</p> <p>GG Target 2.2: By 2021, An active mechanism exists for petitions submitted to parliament with more than 500 signatures to discuss and vote in the parliament</p> <p>GG Target 2.3: By 2023, Maldives joins Open Government Partnership (OPG)</p>
Community Livelihoods & Poverty Reduction	Dignified Families	<p>1.2 By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions</p> <p>1.4 By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance</p> <p>10.1 By 2030, progressively achieve and sustain income growth of the bottom 40 per cent of the population at a rate higher than the national average</p>	<p>1.2.1 Proportion of population living below the national poverty line, by sex and age</p> <p>1.2.2 Proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions</p> <p>1.4.1 Proportion of population living in households with access to basic services</p> <p>1.4.2 Proportion of total adult population with secure tenure rights to land, (a) with legally recognized documentation, and (b) who perceive their rights to land as secure, by sex and type of tenure</p> <p>10.1.1 Growth rates of household expenditure or income per capita among the bottom 40 per cent of the population and the total population</p> <p>16.1.1 Number of victims of intentional homicide per 100,000 population, by sex and age</p> <p>16.1.2 Conflict-related deaths per 100,000 population, by sex, age and cause</p> <p>16.4.1 Total value of inward and outward illicit financial flows (in current United States dollars)</p> <p>16.4.2 Proportion of seized, found or surrendered arms whose illicit origin or context has been traced or established by a competent authority in line with international instruments</p> <p>11.4.1 Total per capita expenditure on the preservation, protection and conservation of all cultural and natural heritage, by source of funding (public, private), type of heritage (cultural, natural) and level of government (national, regional, and local/municipal)</p>	<p>BE Target 4.2: By 2023, at least 5 targeted training events conducted for disadvantaged groups in fishing communities</p> <p>BE Target 6.2: By 2023, at least MVR 50 million is disbursed as loans to small scale fishery businesses (SMEs)</p> <p>BE Target 1.2: By 2023, at least 1,500 farmers & 10 agricultural enterprises including 300 women benefited from the loan scheme</p> <p>BE Target 2.1: By 2023, 120 micro enterprises, 720 small enterprises and 360 medium enterprises benefits from SDFC</p> <p>BE Target 2.2: Between 2019 and 2023, at least 10 SMEs benefit from the CGS programmes annually</p> <p>BE Target 2.3: By 2021, 40% of SDFC loan portfolio is allocated to women, youth and PWDs</p>
Crime and violent extremism	Caring State	<p>16.1 Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere</p> <p>16.4 By 2030, significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime</p>	<p>16.1.1 Number of victims of intentional homicide per 100,000 population, by sex and age</p> <p>16.1.2 Conflict-related deaths per 100,000 population, by sex, age and cause</p> <p>16.4.1 Total value of inward and outward illicit financial flows (in current United States dollars)</p> <p>16.4.2 Proportion of seized, found or surrendered arms whose illicit origin or context has been traced or established by a competent authority in line with international instruments</p>	<p>DF Target 1.2: By 2023, all schools in the Maldives have teachers professionally trained to tackle extremist ideology within the school environment</p> <p>GG Target 1.3: By 2023, response to information requested for investigation and prosecution by the state institutions is expedited by 30% compared to 2018 levels</p>
Cultural Identify, traditions & Islamic Faith	Dignified Families	<p>11.4 Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage</p>	<p>11.4.1 Total per capita expenditure on the preservation, protection and conservation of all cultural and natural heritage, by source of funding (public, private), type of heritage (cultural, natural) and level of government (national, regional, and local/municipal)</p>	<p>JD Target 2.1: By 2023, at least MVR 2 million disbursed as grants to support local artists and cultural practitioners</p> <p>JD Target 2.2: By 2023, an effective economic model to sustain and develop cultural establishments is designed and implemented</p> <p>JD Target 6.3: By 2023, at least 50 islands offer culture-based tourism services</p> <p>JD Target 1.2: By 2023, at least 500 artists and culture practitioners have utilised Cultural Centres nationwide</p>
Decentralisation	Jazeera Dhiriulhun Thematic Area	<p>11.3 By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries</p> <p>11.b By 2020, substantially increase the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters, and develop and implement, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, holistic disaster risk management at all levels</p> <p>16.7 Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels</p>	<p>11.3 By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries</p> <p>11.b.1 Number of countries that adopt and implement national disaster risk reduction strategies in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030</p> <p>11.b.2 Proportion of local governments that adopt and implement local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with national disaster risk reduction strategies</p> <p>16.7.2 Proportion of population who believe decision-making is inclusive and responsive, by sex, age, disability and population group</p> <p>16.7.2 Proportion of population who believe decision-making is inclusive and responsive, by sex, age, disability and population group</p>	<p>DF Target 1.1: By 2023, all councils have operationalized mechanisms to include the participation of men and women in the design of development projects and during the local development planning</p> <p>DF Target 1.2: By 2023, at least 90% of islands have CSG fully functioning</p> <p>DF Target 1.3: By 2023, at least 2 social audits have been carried out in any given inhabited island</p> <p>JD Target 1.3: By 2021, all laws and regulations that are in contradiction with the Decentralisation Act are amended</p> <p>JD Target 3.1: By 2023, all councils conduct town hall meetings at least thrice a year</p> <p>JD Target 3.2: By 2023, all local councils participate in the functioning of Community Social Groups (CSGs)</p> <p>JD Target 3.3: By 2023, at least 60% of local councils have signed partnership agreements with NGOs</p>
Digital connectivity, technology and digital literacy	Jazeera Dhiriulhun	<p>9.c Significantly increase access to information and communications technology and strive to provide universal and affordable access to the Internet in least developed countries by 2020</p>	<p>9.c.1 Proportion of population covered by a mobile network, by technology</p>	<p>CS Target 1.5: By 2023, e-learning services are made accessible in all islands</p> <p>CS Target 2.3: By 2023, all schools have student friendly ICT infrastructure</p> <p>CS Target 2.4: By 2023, 80% TRCs are upgraded with human resource and with ICT infrastructure</p>

DRRM System & Infrastructure (early warning, Jazeera Dhirulhun transport, utilities & emergency services)		<p>9.a Facilitate sustainable and resilient infrastructure development in developing countries through enhanced financial, technological and technical support to African countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States</p> <p>11.5 By 2030, significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected and substantially decrease the direct economic losses relative to global gross domestic product caused by disasters, including water-related disasters, with a focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations</p> <p>13.1 Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries</p>	<p>9.a.1 Total official international support (official development assistance plus other official flows) to infrastructure</p> <p>11.2.1 Proportion of population that has convenient access to public transport, by sex, age and persons with disabilities</p> <p>11.5.2 Direct economic loss in relation to global GDP, damage to critical infrastructure and number of disruptions to basic services, attributed to disasters</p> <p>13.1.1 Number of deaths, missing persons and directly affected persons attributed to disasters per 100,000 population</p> <p>13.1.2 Number of countries that adopt and implement national disaster risk reduction strategies in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030</p> <p>13.1.3 Proportion of local governments that adopt and implement local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with national disaster risk reduction strategies</p>	<p>BE Target 2.2: By 2023, at least 3 strategic infrastructure projects are funded by FDI</p> <p>JD Target 1.1: By 2023, National Planning Act mandates risk-based planning processes</p> <p>JD Target 1.2: By 2023, at least 80% of local development plans are risk based</p> <p>JD Target 5.1: By 2023, end to end early warning and emergency communication system operational</p> <p>JD Target 5.2: By 2023, at least 2 regional emergency operations centres operational</p> <p>JD Target 7.2: By 2020, a robust maintenance regime developed to ensure functioning to all weather observatory, forecasting and warning systems in the country</p> <p>CS Target 5.3: By 2023, contingency plans to deliver medical care in situations of disasters and emergencies where health facilities affected are established</p>
Economic Diversification	Blue Economy Thematic Area	<p>8.2 Achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, including through a focus on high-value added and labour-intensive sectors</p>	<p>8.2.1 Annual growth rate of real GDP per employed person</p>	<p>BE Target 3.2: By 2023, at least 3 of the Regional Urban Centres have a marketplace for local products</p> <p>BE Target 4.2: By 2023, a fully integrated shopping zone exists in at least 1 location in the country</p> <p>BE Target 4.3: By 2023, at least 75 fishery-based SMEs received training on financial management and entrepreneurship development</p> <p>BE Target 5.1: By 2023, an economic feasibility study exists for the establishment of live bait as a separate fishery</p> <p>CS Target 2.3: By 2023, 500 vulnerable youth received higher education scholarships and/or loans</p>
Educated and Skilled workforce (local and migrant workers)	Caring State	<p>4.4 By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship</p> <p>4.5 By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations</p> <p>8.6 By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training</p>	<p>4.4.1 Proportion of youth and adults with information and communications technology (ICT) skills, by type of skill</p> <p>4.5.1 Parity indices (female/male, rural/urban, bottom/top wealth quintile and others such as disability status, indigenous peoples and conflict-affected, as data become available) for all education indicators on this list that can be disaggregated</p> <p>8.6.1 Proportion of youth (aged 15–24 years) not in education, employment or training</p>	<p>BE Target 3.3: By 2023, skills programmes offered by TVET are streamlined to meet the needs of industries and support economic diversification</p> <p>BE Target 3.1: By 2023, at least 2 new training programmes exist on marine resource management</p> <p>BE Target 4.1: By 2023, at least 30,000 benefited from the Tourism Training Fund</p> <p>BE Target 4.2: By 2023, at least 5 targeted training events conducted for disadvantaged groups in fishing communities</p> <p>BE Target 4.3: By 2023, at least 75 fishery-based SMEs received training on financial management and entrepreneurship development</p> <p>DF Target 3.2: By 2023, at least 40% of TVET graduates are young people of a vulnerable status</p> <p>GG Target 3.3: By 2023, at least 50% of entrepreneurship trainees at the BDCs are women</p>
Engagement and Empowerment of Women at all Administrative Levels	Good Governance	<p>5.5 Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making in political, economic and public life</p> <p>5.c Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels</p> <p>10.2 By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status</p>	<p>5.5.1 Proportion of seats held by women in (a) national parliaments and (b) local governments</p> <p>5.5.2 Proportion of women in managerial positions</p> <p>5.c.1 Proportion of countries with systems to track and make public allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment</p> <p>10.2.1 Proportion of people living below 50 per cent of median income, by sex, age and persons with disabilities</p>	<p>GG Target 1.1: By 2020, national targets for female representation at key decision-making levels are finalised</p> <p>GG Target 1.1: By 2023, all councils have operationalized mechanisms to include the participation of men and women in the design of development projects and during the local development planning</p>

Environment Quality Management & Enforcement	Jazeera Dhiriulhun	<p>6.3 By 2030, improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and materials, halving the proportion of untreated wastewater and substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse globally</p> <p>12.5 By 2030, substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse</p> <p>14.2 By 2020, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience, and take action for their restoration in order to achieve healthy and productive oceans</p> <p>14.4 By 2020, effectively regulate harvesting and end overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and destructive fishing practices and implement science-based management plans, in order to restore fish stocks in the shortest time feasible, at least to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield as determined by their biological characteristics</p> <p>15.5 Take urgent and significant action to reduce the degradation of natural habitats, halt the loss of biodiversity and, by 2020, protect and prevent the extinction of threatened species</p>	<p>6.3.1 Proportion of domestic and industrial wastewater flows safely treated</p> <p>6.3.2 Proportion of bodies of water with good ambient water quality</p> <p>12.5.1 National Recycling Rate, tons of material recycled</p> <p>14.2.1 Number of countries using ecosystem-based approaches to managing marine areas</p> <p>14.4.1 Proportion of fish stocks within biologically sustainable levels</p> <p>15.5.1 Red List Index</p>	<p>JD Target 1.1: By 2020, integrate environmental protection and biodiversity conservation with the guidelines, regulations and compliance documents on land use planning, local developments planning, building and all infrastructure development projects</p> <p>JD Target 5.1: By 2023, an up-to-date database on biodiversity and ecosystems of Maldives is institutionalised and is utilised for conservation, monitoring and enforcement</p> <p>JD Target 2.2: By 2022, a comprehensive reef restoration and protection mechanism under the concept of "Jazeera Island Reef" is introduced and implemented</p> <p>JD Target 2.3: By 2023, at least 10% of coral reef area, 20% of wetlands and mangroves and at least one sand bank and one uninhabited island from each atoll are under some form of protection and management</p> <p>JD Target 5.2: By 2023, user pay principle is mainstreamed and integrated into policies and regulations concerning utilisation of biodiversity resources and ecosystem services</p> <p>BE Target 3.1: By 2023, at least 2 new training programmes exist on marine resource management</p>
Environmental Monitoring and data collection	Jazeera Dhiriulhun	<p>14.a Increase scientific knowledge, develop research capacity and transfer marine technology, taking into account the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission Criteria and Guidelines on the Transfer of Marine Technology, in order to improve ocean health and to enhance the contribution of marine biodiversity to the development of developing countries, in particular small island developing States and least developed countries</p>	<p>14.a.1 Proportion of total research budget allocated to research in the field of marine technology</p>	<p>JD Target 3.1: By 2023, establish an evidence-based monitoring system to track the status of key ecosystems, species, and genetic diversity as well as protected areas and species found in the Maldives</p> <p>JD Target 5.1: By 2023, an up-to-date database on biodiversity and ecosystems of Maldives is institutionalised and is utilised for conservation, monitoring and enforcement</p> <p>JD Target 2.1: By 2023, at least 7 of the 15 designated National Coral Reef Monitoring sites are monitored and status of coral reef ecosystems are published annually</p>
Family Support Services	Jazeera Dhiriulhun	<p>1.5 By 2030, build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters</p> <p>1.b Create sound policy frameworks at the national, regional and international levels, based on pro-poor and gender-sensitive development strategies, to support accelerated investment in poverty eradication actions</p>	<p>1.b.1 Pro-poor public social spending</p>	<p>DF Target 3.4: By 2023, at least 1 elderly residential home established and operation under Public Private Partnership</p> <p>DF Target 4.1: By 2022, all Community Social Groups (CSGs) provide Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR)</p> <p>DF Target 4.2: By 2023, psychosocial support services provided to vulnerable groups through FCSGs increased by more than 50% compared to 2018 level</p> <p>DF Target 1.1: By 2023, new housing units developed and utilized by 20,000 families</p>
Food Security	Blue Economy	<p>2.4 By 2030, ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, that help maintain ecosystems, that strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters and that progressively improve land and soil quality</p>	<p>2.4.1 Proportion of agricultural area under productive and sustainable agriculture</p>	<p>BE Target 1.4: By 2023, at least 10 targeted training programs on food security and food safety related matters are conducted</p> <p>BE Target 1.4: By 2023, 20 Commercial Farms are M-GAP Certified</p> <p>BE Target 3.1: By 2023, IPM Guidelines are fully implemented in at least 50 agricultural islands</p> <p>BE Target 3.2: By 2023, 50 islands received training in homebased hydroponics systems and sustainable irrigation technologies</p> <p>BE Target 3.3: By 2023, 05 Coconut based Agroforestry systems will be developed and modelled in Agricultural Centres</p>
Healthcare Human Capacity & Infrastructure	Caring State	<p>3.8 Achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all</p> <p>3.c Substantially increase health financing and the recruitment, development, training and retention of the health workforce in developing countries, especially in least developed countries and small island developing States</p> <p>3.d Strengthen the capacity of all countries, in particular developing countries, for early warning, risk reduction and management of national and global health risks</p>	<p>3.8.1 Coverage of essential health services</p> <p>3.8.2 Proportion of population with large household expenditures on health as a share of total household expenditure or income</p> <p>3.c.1 Health worker density and distribution</p> <p>3.d.1 International Health Regulations (IHR) capacity and health emergency preparedness</p>	<p>CS Target 1.4: By 2023, government spending on public health protection increased by 10% compared to 2018 level</p> <p>CS Target 3.1: By 2023, at least 5 fully functioning tertiary hospitals established in Regional Urban Centres (RUCs)</p> <p>CS Target 3.2: By 2023, every island has trained community health workers dedicated for home visits to provide health check-ups and awareness</p> <p>CS Target 3.4: By 2023, sample transfer mechanism is operational in at least 2 regions</p> <p>CS Target 7.1: By 2023, at least 200 Primary Healthcare professionals trained to provide services at island level</p>
Higher Education & VET & Re-skilling training	Caring State	<p>4.3 By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university</p> <p>4.4 By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship</p> <p>4.5 By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations</p>	<p>4.3.1 Participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 months, by sex</p> <p>4.4.1 Proportion of youth and adults with information and communications technology (ICT) skills, by type of skill</p> <p>4.5.1 Parity indices (female/male, rural/urban, bottom/top wealth quintile and others such as disability status, indigenous peoples and conflict-affected, as data become available) for all education indicators on this list that can be disaggregated</p>	<p>CS Target 1.4: By 2023, 5 Higher Education and Training facilities in 5 different regions established and operational</p> <p>CS Target 1.3: By 2023, 5 junior colleges in 5 identified regions established and operational</p> <p>CS Target 2.1: By 2023, at least 25,000 students given opportunity to study under the free first-degree scheme</p> <p>CS Target 1.5: By 2023, e-learning services are made accessible in all islands</p>

System Element	SAP Pillar	SDG Targets Aligned with this Element	SDG Target Indicators	SAP Target Alignment
Disaster Risk Reduction, Response & Recovery Capacity	Jazeera Dhiriulhun	<p>1.5 By 2030, build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters</p> <p>11.5 By 2030, significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected and substantially decrease the direct economic losses relative to global gross domestic product caused by disasters, including water-related disasters, with a focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations</p> <p>13.1 Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries</p>	<p>1.5.2 Direct economic loss attributed to disasters in relation to global gross domestic product (GDP)</p> <p>1.5.3 Number of countries that adopt and implement national disaster risk reduction strategies in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030</p> <p>11.5.1 Number of deaths, missing persons and directly affected persons attributed to disasters per 100,000 population</p> <p>11.5.2 Direct economic loss in relation to global GDP, damage to critical infrastructure and number of disruptions to basic services, attributed to disasters</p> <p>13.1.1 Number of deaths, missing persons and directly affected persons attributed to disasters per 100,000 population</p> <p>13.1.2 Number of countries that adopt and implement national disaster risk reduction strategies in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030</p> <p>13.1.3 Proportion of local governments that adopt and implement local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with national disaster risk reduction strategies</p> <p>11.3.2 Proportion of cities with a direct participation structure of civil society in urban planning and management that operate regularly and democratically</p>	<p>JD Target 1.1: By 2023, National Planning Act mandates risk-based planning processes</p> <p>JD Target 1.2: By 2023, at least 80% of local development plans are risk based</p> <p>JD Target 4.2: By 2023, community based disaster risk management is practiced at community level across the country</p> <p>JD Target 5.2: By 2023, at least 2 regional emergency operations centres operational</p> <p>JD Target 1.1: By 2020, integrate environmental protection and biodiversity conservation with the guidelines, regulations and compliance documents on land use planning, local developments planning, building and all infrastructure development projects</p> <p>JD Target 7.3: By 2023, ocean weather prediction modelling and forecasting system is in place</p> <p>CS Target 5.3: By 2023, contingency plans to deliver medical care in situations of disasters and emergencies where health facilities affected are established</p>
LCs Capacity to develop LUP & DRRM plan (Implementation & Oversight)	Jazeera Dhiriulhun	<p>11.3 By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries</p> <p>13.1 Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate related hazards and natural disasters in all countries</p>	<p>11.3.2 Proportion of cities with a direct participation structure of civil society in urban planning and management that operate regularly and democratically</p>	<p>JD Target 1.1: By 2023, all councils have operationalized mechanisms to include the participation of men and women in the design of development projects and during the local development planning</p> <p>JD Target 1.1: By 2023, National Planning Act mandates risk-based planning processes</p> <p>JD Target 1.2: By 2023, at least 80% of local development plans are risk based</p> <p>JD Target 1.2: By 2022, all island councils have an approved and publicly available land use plan</p> <p>JD Target 2.3: By end of 2021, all local development plans are aligned to the Strategic Action Plan and National Development Plan are risk based</p> <p>JD Target 1.1: By 2020, integrate environmental protection and biodiversity conservation with the guidelines, regulations and compliance documents on land use planning, local developments planning, building and all infrastructure development projects</p>
Participation of women in decision making process at local level	Good Governance	<p>5.5 Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making in political, economic and public life</p>	<p>5.5.1 Proportion of seats held by women in (a) national parliaments and (b) local governments</p> <p>5.5.2 Proportion of women in managerial positions</p>	<p>GG Target 1.1: By 2020, national targets for female representation at key decision-making levels are finalised</p> <p>GG Target 4.1: By 2020, at least a third of councilors are women</p> <p>DF Target 4.1: By 2023, all National Associations have at least 33% women in their executive boards/committees</p>
Digital connectivity, technology and digital literacy	Jazeera Dhiriulhun	<p>9.c Significantly increase access to information and communications technology and strive to provide universal and affordable access to the Internet in least developed countries by 2020</p>	<p>9.c.1 Proportion of population covered by a mobile network, by technology</p>	<p>DF Target 3.4: By 2023, at least 50 young women led businesses are supported with technical support and integration to digital marketing platforms</p> <p>CS Target 1.5: By 2023, e-learning services are made accessible in all islands</p>
Rule of Law	Good Governance	<p>16.3 Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all</p>	<p>16.3.1 Proportion of victims of violence in the previous 12 months who reported their victimization to competent authorities or other officially recognized conflict resolution mechanisms</p>	<p>GG Target 1.1: By 2020, transitional justice mechanism is operational</p> <p>GG Target 1.2: By 2023, provide redress to more than 50% of the cases submitted to the transitional justice mechanism</p> <p>GG Target 2.1: By 2023, District Courts are operational in at least 2 regions of the Maldives</p> <p>GG Target 2.2: By 2023, public confidence in the court system improve by 25% compared to 2018 level</p> <p>GG Target 3.1: By 2023, at least 75% of all complaints submitted to JSC is investigated and addressed</p> <p>GG Target 2.3: By 2023, cases resolved through ADR mechanism increased at least by 50% compared to 2018</p> <p>GG Target 3.2: By 2022, appraisal for all sitting judges is completed</p>

Accountability Mechanism for Local Councils	Good Governance	<p>16.6 Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels</p> <p>16.10 Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements</p>	<p>16.6.1 Primary government expenditures as a proportion of original approved budget, by sector (or by budget codes or similar)</p> <p>16.6.2 Proportion of population satisfied with their last experience of public services</p> <p>16.10.2 Number of countries that adopt and implement constitutional, statutory and/or policy guarantees for public access to information</p>	<p>GG Target 1.2: Parliamentary deliberations accessed by public increased by 10% annually</p> <p>GG Target 1.4: By 2023, Public confidence in parliament increased by 20% compared to 2018</p> <p>GG Target 2.1: By 2023, 75% of the bills passed by the Parliament incorporates feedback from citizens</p> <p>GG Target 2.2: By 2021, An active mechanism exists for petitions submitted to parliament with more than 500 signatures to discuss and vote in the parliament</p> <p>GG Target 4.3: By 2023, Audit reports show that all SOEs conduct procurement in a fair and transparent manner and that corruption and bribery cases are eliminated in SOEs</p> <p>GG Target 5.3: By 2023, Press Freedom Index for Maldives improved by more than 25% compared to 2019 level</p> <p>GG Target 1.2: By 2021, Integrity Officers are active and implementing their roles</p> <p>GG Target 3.1: By 2023, all state institutions utilise and comply fully with the Public Finance Act and guidelines</p> <p>GG Target 1.1: By 2023, at least 70% of audits conducted for independent institutions were reviewed and scrutinised by the Parliamentary Committees</p>
Disaster resilient Infrastructure (early warning, transport, public services)	Jazeera Dhiriulhun	<p>9.a Facilitate sustainable and resilient infrastructure development in developing countries through enhanced financial, technological and technical support to African countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States</p> <p>11.2 By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons</p>	<p>9.a.1 Total official international support (official development assistance plus other official flows) to infrastructure</p> <p>11.2.1 Proportion of population that has convenient access to public transport, by sex, age and persons with disabilities</p>	<p>JD Target 1.1: By 2023, National Planning Act mandates risk-based planning processes</p> <p>JD Target 1.2: By 2023, at least 80% of local development plans are risk based</p> <p>BE Target 2.2: By 2023, at least 3 strategic infrastructure projects are funded by FDI</p>
Environment protection and natural resource management of atolls/islands	Jazeera Dhiriulhun	<p>14.2 By 2020, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience, and take action for their restoration in order to achieve healthy and productive oceans</p> <p>14.5 By 2020, conserve at least 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, consistent with national and international law and based on the best available scientific information</p> <p>6.6 By 2020, protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes</p> <p>15.8 By 2020, introduce measures to prevent the introduction and significantly reduce the impact of invasive alien species on land and water ecosystems and control or eradicate the priority species</p>	<p>14.2.1 Number of countries using ecosystem-based approaches to managing marine areas</p> <p>14.5.1 Coverage of protected areas in relation to marine areas</p> <p>6.6.1 Change in the extent of water-related ecosystems over time</p> <p>15.8.1 Proportion of countries adopting relevant national legislation and adequately resourcing the prevention or control of invasive alien species</p>	<p>JD Target 2.1: By 2023, at least 7 of the 15 designated National Coral Reef Monitoring sites are monitored and status of coral reef ecosystems are published annually</p> <p>JD Target 1.1: By 2020, integrate environmental protection and biodiversity conservation with the guidelines, regulations and compliance documents on land use planning, local developments planning, building and all infrastructure development projects</p>
Local Council Budget & Fiscal management	Jazeera Dhiriulhun	<p>16.6 Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels</p>	<p>16.6.1 Primary government expenditures as a proportion of original approved budget, by sector (or by budget codes or similar)</p>	<p>GG Target 4.3: By 2023, Audit reports show that all SOEs conduct procurement in a fair and transparent manner and that corruption and bribery cases are eliminated in SOEs</p> <p>GG Target 1.2: By 2023, all independent institutions audited were able to comply at minimum 80% of the recommendations</p>
Decentralisation	Thematic Area Jazeera Dhiriulhun	<p>11.3 By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries</p>	<p>11.3.1 Ratio of land consumption rate to population growth rate</p> <p>11.3.2 Proportion of cities with a direct participation structure of civil society in urban planning and management that operate regularly and democratically</p>	<p>JD Target 1.2: By 2022, all island councils have an approved and publicly available land use plan</p> <p>JD Target 3.1: By 2023, all councils conduct town hall meetings at least thrice a year</p> <p>JD Target 3.3: By 2023, at least 60% of local councils have signed partnership agreements with NGOs</p> <p>JD Target 2.3: By end of 2021, all local development plans are aligned to the Strategic Action Plan and National Development Plan are risk based</p> <p>JD Target 1.1: By 2020, integrate environmental protection and biodiversity conservation with the guidelines, regulations and compliance documents on land use planning, local developments planning, building and all infrastructure development projects</p> <p>DF Target 1.1: By 2023, all councils have operationalized mechanisms to include the participation of men and women in the design of development projects and during the local development planning</p>

DRRM, and Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Measures	Jazeera Dhiriulhun	<p>11.b By 2020, substantially increase the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters, and develop and implement, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, holistic disaster risk management at all levels</p> <p>13.1 Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate related hazards and natural disasters in all countries</p>	<p>13.1.2 Number of countries that adopt and implement national disaster risk reduction strategies in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030</p> <p>13.1.3 Proportion of local governments that adopt and implement local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with national disaster risk reduction strategies</p>	<p>JD Target 1.1: By 2023, National Planning Act mandates risk-based planning processes</p> <p>JD Target 1.2: By 2023, at least 80% of local development plans are risk based</p> <p>JD Target 4.2: By 2023, community based disaster risk management is practiced at community level across the country</p> <p>JD Target 7.2: By 2020, a robust maintenance regime developed to ensure functioning to all weather observatory, forecasting and warning systems in the country</p>
Election process for Local Councils	Jazeera Dhiriulhun	<p>16.7 Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels</p>	<p>16.7.2 Proportion of population who believe decision making is inclusive and responsive, by sex, age, disability and population group</p>	<p>GG Target 2.3: By 2023, Maldives joins Open Government Partnership (OPG)</p>
Local Councils Autonomy in Mgmt and Utilization of Resources	Jazeera Dhiriulhun	<p>16.6 Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels</p>	<p>16.6.1 Primary government expenditures as a proportion of original approved budget, by sector (or by budget codes or similar)</p> <p>16.6.2 Proportion of population satisfied with their last experience of public services</p>	
Engagement & Participation of local community in island level development decisions	Dignified Families	<p>11.3 By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries</p>	<p>11.3.2 Proportion of cities with a direct participation structure of civil society in urban planning and management that operate regularly and democratically</p>	<p>DF Target 1.1: By 2023, all councils have operationalized mechanisms to include the participation of men and women in the design of development projects and during the local development planning</p> <p>DF Policy 3: Empower Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) to contribute towards an inclusive political, cultural and socio-economic environment</p> <p>JD Target 3.1: By 2023, all councils conduct town hall meetings at least thrice a year</p>
Decentralisation Governance Model (Long term vision & plan)	Good Governance	<p>11.b By 2020, substantially increase the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters, and develop and implement, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, holistic disaster risk management at all levels</p> <p>16.6 Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels</p>	<p>11.b.1 Number of countries that adopt and implement national disaster risk reduction strategies in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030</p> <p>11.b.2 Proportion of local governments that adopt and implement local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with national disaster risk reduction strategies</p> <p>16.6.1 Primary government expenditures as a proportion of original approved budget, by sector (or by budget codes or similar)</p> <p>16.6.2 Proportion of population satisfied with their last experience of public services</p>	<p>DF Target 1.1: By 2023, all councils have operationalized mechanisms to include the participation of men and women in the design of development projects and during the local development planning</p> <p>JD Target 3.1: By 2023, all councils conduct town hall meetings at least thrice a year</p>
Coordination / communication between LGA and LCs	Jazeera Dhiriulhun	<p>11.3 By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries</p> <p>16.6 Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels</p>	<p>11.3.2 Proportion of cities with a direct participation structure of civil society in urban planning and management that operate regularly and democratically</p> <p>16.6 Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels</p>	
Access and Quality of Social Services and Health Care for All	Caring State	<p>1.3 Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable</p> <p>3.8 Achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all</p>	<p>1.3.1 Proportion of population covered by social protection floors/systems, by sex, distinguishing children, unemployed persons, older persons, persons with disabilities, pregnant women, newborns, work-injury victims and the poor and the vulnerable</p> <p>3.8.1 Coverage of essential health services</p> <p>3.8.2 Proportion of population with large household expenditures on health as a share of total household expenditure or income</p>	<p>CS Target 1.1: By 2021, expand the coverage of Aasandha facilities on critical illnesses and specific chronic diseases to private hospitals and clinics</p> <p>CS Target 1.2: By 2023, a well-coordinated social welfare system is established</p> <p>CS Target 1.4: By 2023, at least 70% of the most eligible are benefitted from a harmonized social protection mechanism</p> <p>CS Target 1.4: By 2023, government spending on public health protection increased by 10% compared to 2018 level</p> <p>CS Target 3.1: By 2023, at least 5 fully functioning tertiary hospitals established in Regional Urban Centres (RUCs)</p> <p>CS Target 3.2: By 2023, every island has trained community health workers dedicated for home visits to provide health check-ups and awareness</p> <p>CS Target 3.4: By 2023, sample transfer mechanism is operational in at least 2 regions</p> <p>CS Target 7.1: By 2023, at least 200 Primary Healthcare professionals trained to provide services at island level</p>

Empowerment of Community Social Groups (CSGs) in island/atoll development	Jazeera Dhiriulhun	<p>10.2 By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status</p>	<p>10.2.1 Proportion of people living below 50 per cent of median income, by sex, age and persons with disabilities</p>	<p>DF Target 3.2: Between 2021 and 2023, at least 20 grants are disbursed through the CSO Fund to CSOs annually DF Target 1.2: By 2023, at least 90% of islands have CSG fully functioning JD Target 3.2: By 2023, all local councils participate in the functioning of Community Social Groups (CSGs) JD Target 3.3: By 2023, at least 60% of local councils have signed partnership agreements with NGOs DF Target 1.4: By 2022, all islands have trained Community Empowerment Officers with 30% women DF Target 4.2: By 2023, community based disaster risk management is practiced at community level across the country JD Target 2.2: By 2023, 30% of energy consumption for water and sewerage facilities across the Maldives will be met with renewable energy GG Target 2.3: By 2023, public confidence in public service delivery is improved by 25% compared to 2018 GG Target 2.4: By 2023, all public service training is provided by PSTI</p>
Management & provisioning of Municipal services	Jazeera Dhiriulhun	<p>6.1 By 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all 6.2 By 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations 7.1 By 2030, ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services 11.1 By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums 12.5 By 2030, substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse</p>	<p>6.1.1 Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services 6.2.1 Proportion of population using (a) safely managed sanitation services and (b) a hand-washing facility with soap and water 7.1.1 Proportion of population with access to electricity 11.1.1 Proportion of urban population living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing 12.5.1 National recycling rate, tons of material recycled</p>	<p>BE Target 3.2: By 2023, at least 3 of the Regional Urban Centres have a marketplace for local products BE Target 4.2: By 2023, a fully integrated shopping zone exists in at least 1 location in the country BE Target 4.3: By 2023, at least 75 fishery-based SMEs received training on financial management and entrepreneurship development BE Target 5.1: By 2023, an economic feasibility study exists for the establishment of live bait as a separate fishery GG Target 1.1: By 2020, national targets for female representation at key decision-making levels are finalised GG Target 6.3: By 2023, all political parties have a quota for women amongst those who contest for elected positions JD Target 4.1: By 2020, at least a third of councilors are women DF Target 1.3: By 2023, young male and female representation is achieved in at least 6 government decision making bodies and in at least 5 parliamentary committees</p>
Economic diversification	Blue Economy Thematic Area	<p>8.2 Achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, including through a focus on high-value added and labour-intensive sectors</p>	<p>8.2.1 Annual growth rate of real GDP per employed person</p>	<p>BE Target 3.2: By 2023, at least 3 of the Regional Urban Centres have a marketplace for local products BE Target 4.2: By 2023, a fully integrated shopping zone exists in at least 1 location in the country BE Target 4.3: By 2023, at least 75 fishery-based SMEs received training on financial management and entrepreneurship development BE Target 5.1: By 2023, an economic feasibility study exists for the establishment of live bait as a separate fishery GG Target 1.1: By 2020, national targets for female representation at key decision-making levels are finalised GG Target 6.3: By 2023, all political parties have a quota for women amongst those who contest for elected positions JD Target 4.1: By 2020, at least a third of councilors are women DF Target 1.3: By 2023, young male and female representation is achieved in at least 6 government decision making bodies and in at least 5 parliamentary committees</p>
Role and Function of Women Development Committee in Island Governance & Development	Jazeera Dhiriulhun	<p>5.5 Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making in political, economic and public life 5.c Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels 10.2 By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status 16.10 Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements 17.19 By 2030, build on existing initiatives to develop measurements of progress on sustainable development that complement gross domestic product, and support statistical capacity-building in developing countries</p>	<p>5.5.1 Proportion of seats held by women in (a) national parliaments and (b) local governments 5.5.2 Proportion of women in managerial positions 5.c.1 Proportion of countries with systems to track and make public allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment 10.2.1 Proportion of people living below 50 per cent of median income, by sex, age and persons with disabilities</p>	<p>GG Target 2.2: By 2023, active use of a centralised and integrated information management system is practiced</p>
Data Collection, Monitoring, Reporting & Verification	Good Governance	<p>16.10 Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements 17.19 By 2030, build on existing initiatives to develop measurements of progress on sustainable development that complement gross domestic product, and support statistical capacity-building in developing countries</p>	<p>16.10.2 Number of countries that adopt and implement constitutional, statutory and/or policy guarantees for public access to information 17.19.1 Dollar value of all resources made available to strengthen statistical capacity in developing countries</p>	<p>GG Target 2.2: By 2023, active use of a centralised and integrated information management system is practiced</p>
Resilience (e.g. to disasters and other external shocks)	Thematic Area Dignified Families	<p>1.5 By 2030, build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters 11.b By 2020, substantially increase the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters, and develop and implement, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, holistic disaster risk management at all levels 13.1 Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate related hazards and natural disasters in all countries</p>	<p>1.5.2 Direct economic loss attributed to disasters in relation to global gross domestic product (GDP) 1.5.3 Number of countries that adopt and implement national disaster risk reduction strategies in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 1.5.4 Proportion of local governments that adopt and implement local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with national disaster risk reduction strategies 11.b.1 Number of countries that adopt and implement national disaster risk reduction strategies in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 11.b.2 Proportion of local governments that adopt and implement local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with national disaster risk reduction strategies 13.1.1 Number of deaths, missing persons and directly affected persons attributed to disasters per 100,000 population 13.1.2 Number of countries that adopt and implement national disaster risk reduction strategies in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 16.6.1 Primary government expenditures as a proportion of original approved budget, by sector (or by budget codes or similar)</p>	<p>GG Target 3.1: By 2023, all state institutions utilise and comply fully with the Public Finance Act and guidelines GG Target 3.3: By 2023, reduce budgetary deviations to 15% of the Approved Budget</p>
Central Government budget policy and allocation mechanism to Local Councils	Good Governance	<p>16.6 Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels</p>	<p>16.6.1 Primary government expenditures as a proportion of original approved budget, by sector (or by budget codes or similar)</p>	<p>GG Target 3.1: By 2023, all state institutions utilise and comply fully with the Public Finance Act and guidelines GG Target 3.3: By 2023, reduce budgetary deviations to 15% of the Approved Budget</p>

Administrative Structure from Islands to Atolls to Central Gov.	Good Governance	<p>16.6 Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels</p>	<p>16.6.1 Primary government expenditures as a proportion of original approved budget, by sector (or by budget codes or similar)</p> <p>16.6.2 Proportion of population satisfied with their last experience of public services</p>	
Education & Technical Training Opportunities for Local Gov., WDCs, admin. staff & local community	Good Governance	<p>4.3 By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university</p> <p>4.4 By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship</p>	<p>4.3.1 Participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 months, by sex</p> <p>4.4.1 Proportion of youth and adults with information and communications technology (ICT) skills, by type of skill</p>	
Community Engagement Mechanism & Supporting Resources	Good Governance	<p>10.2 By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status</p> <p>16.7 Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels</p>	<p>10.2.1 Proportion of people living below 50 per cent of median income, by sex, age and persons with disabilities</p> <p>16.7.1 Proportions of positions in national and local institutions, including (a) the legislatures; (b) the public service; and (c) the judiciary, compared to national distributions, by sex, age, persons with disabilities and population groups</p>	<p>DF Target 1.1: By 2023, all councils have operationalized mechanisms to include the participation of men and women in the design of development projects and during the local development planning</p>
Policy and Regulatory Framework for Decentralisation	Jazeera Dhiriulhun	<p>11.b By 2020, substantially increase the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters, and develop and implement, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, holistic disaster risk management at all levels</p> <p>16.6 Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels</p> <p>16.b Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development</p>	<p>11.b.1 Number of countries that adopt and implement national disaster risk reduction strategies in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030</p> <p>11.b.2 Proportion of local governments that adopt and implement local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with national disaster risk reduction strategies</p> <p>16.b.1 Proportion of population reporting having personally felt discriminated against or harassed in the previous 12 months on the basis of a ground of discrimination prohibited under international human rights law</p>	
Management capacity of Local Councils	Good Governance	<p>17.9 Enhance international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity-building in developing countries to support national plans to implement all the Sustainable Development Goals, including through North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation</p>	<p>17.9.1 Dollar value of financial and technical assistance (including through North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation) committed to developing countries</p>	<p>GG Target 2.3: By 2023, public confidence in public service delivery is improved by 25% compared to 2018</p> <p>DF Target 1.1: By 2023, all councils have operationalized mechanisms to include the participation of men and women in the design of development projects and during the local development planning</p>
Revenue raising capacity of local councils	Jazeera Dhiriulhun	<p>17.1 Strengthen domestic resource mobilization, including through international support to developing countries, to improve domestic capacity for tax and other revenue collection</p>	<p>17.1.1 Total government revenue as a proportion of GDP, by source</p> <p>17.1.2 Proportion of domestic budget funded by domestic taxes</p>	