



CASE STUDY

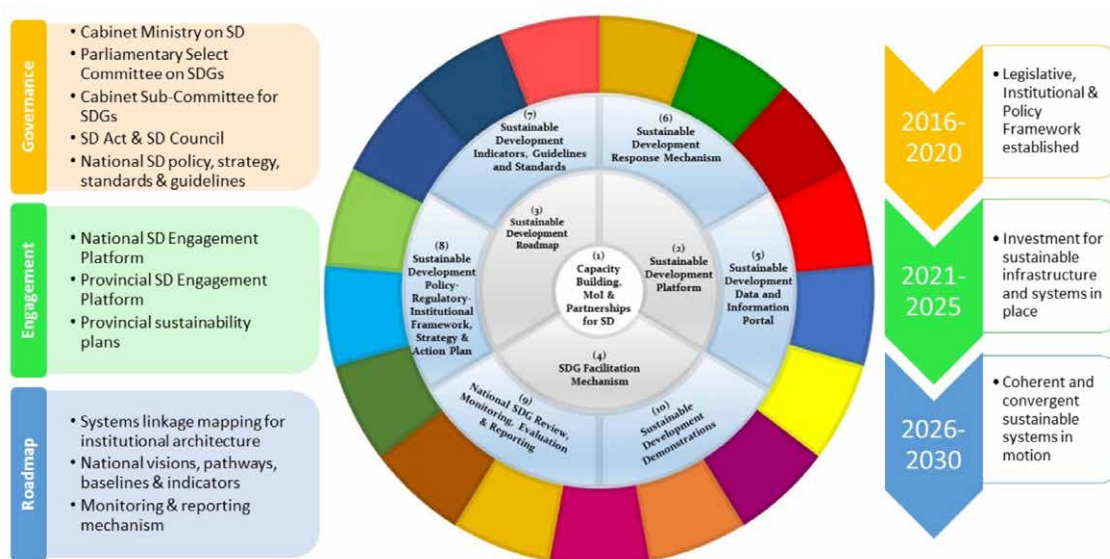
National Planning and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Sri Lanka

Developed by a national team led by Mr. Uchita de Zoysa, Sustainable Development Advisor for the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Wildlife, including Ms. Mihiri Thennakoon, Mr. Saffran Mihnar, Ms. Carolina Cirillo, and Ms. Benedetta Nimshani Khawe Thanthrige.

A. The need for clarity on links and trade-offs

“Planning for an Inclusive Transformation” is the overarching theme of the national plan for implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs in Sri Lanka (figure 9). The Government established a Cabinet Ministry on Sustainable Development as a focal agency to coordinate the SDG-related national commitments. Towards strengthening progress accountability, a Parliamentary Select Committee on SDGs and the Cabinet Sub-Committee for SDGs were established. The Ministry of Sustainable Development and Wildlife (MSDW) engages all stakeholders in the planning and implementation of the SDGs via the National Sustainable Development Engagement Platform. The MSDW also initiated the formation of provincial sustainable plans and a national SDG road map to provide the required guidance for the development of sustainable development policy, monitoring, review, reporting and follow-up mechanisms.

Figure 9. A model of the planning process for inclusive transformation in Sri Lanka



Source: Uchita de Zoysa, Sustainable Development Advisor, Ministry of Sustainable Development and Wildlife, 2016



B. Major challenges and how systems thinking and the ESCAP framework helped address them

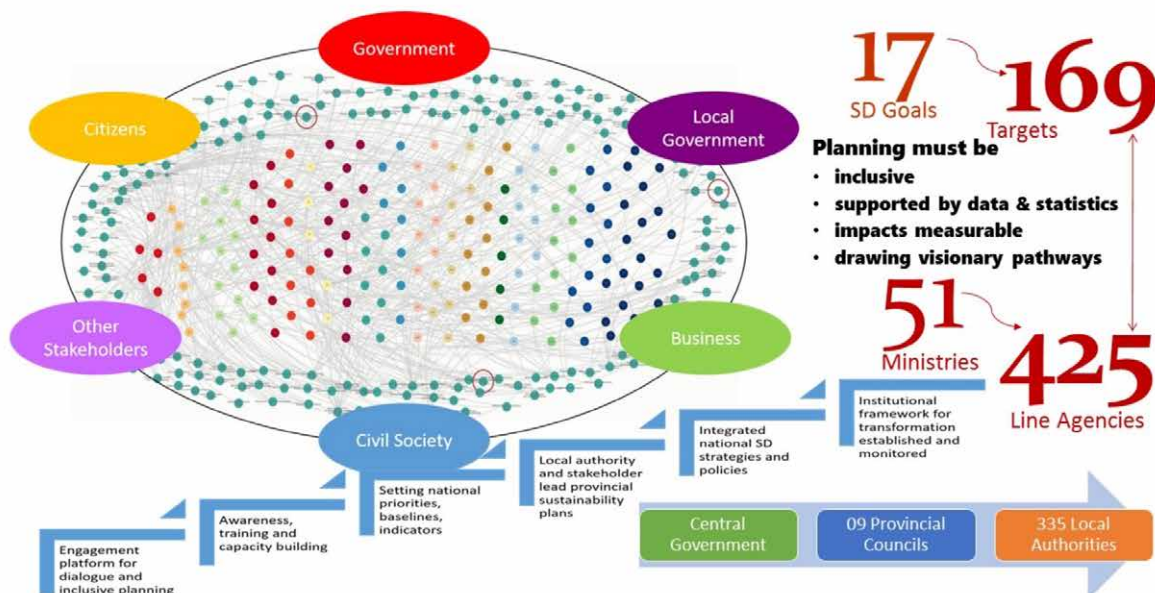
When planning how to improve the attainment rates of SDG 6, the national team in Sri Lanka realized that the water-related challenges included rapid urbanization, water scarcity and degradation. Meeting investment needs and improving financial stability were, to a large extent, due to the institutional fragmentation across Sri Lanka's ministries. The systems thinking framework developed by ESCAP facilitated their understanding of the efficiencies of impact interventions, which they categorized as targeting high- and low-impact leverage points.

The team's further analysis revealed three core development and implementation challenges:

- fragmented institutional structure prevents integration;
- duplication of roles and even contradictory mandates obstructs the transformation; and
- multiple focuses, leading to incongruent investment and applications.

The MSDW now seeks options to address these challenges with the systems thinking approach. Further, by mapping out the roles and responsibilities of the 425 implementing agencies under the 51 government ministries that have some relationship with the SDG 6 targets, along with other stakeholders, the MSDW can improve sector collaboration, data transparency and create an opportunity for integration (figure 10).

Figure 10. Mapping of institutional convergences in Sri Lanka using the systems thinking approach



Source: Uchita de Zoysa, Sustainable Development Advisor, Ministry of Sustainable Development and Wildlife, 2016

C. Developing systems thinking modelling for SDG 6 targets in an integrated manner

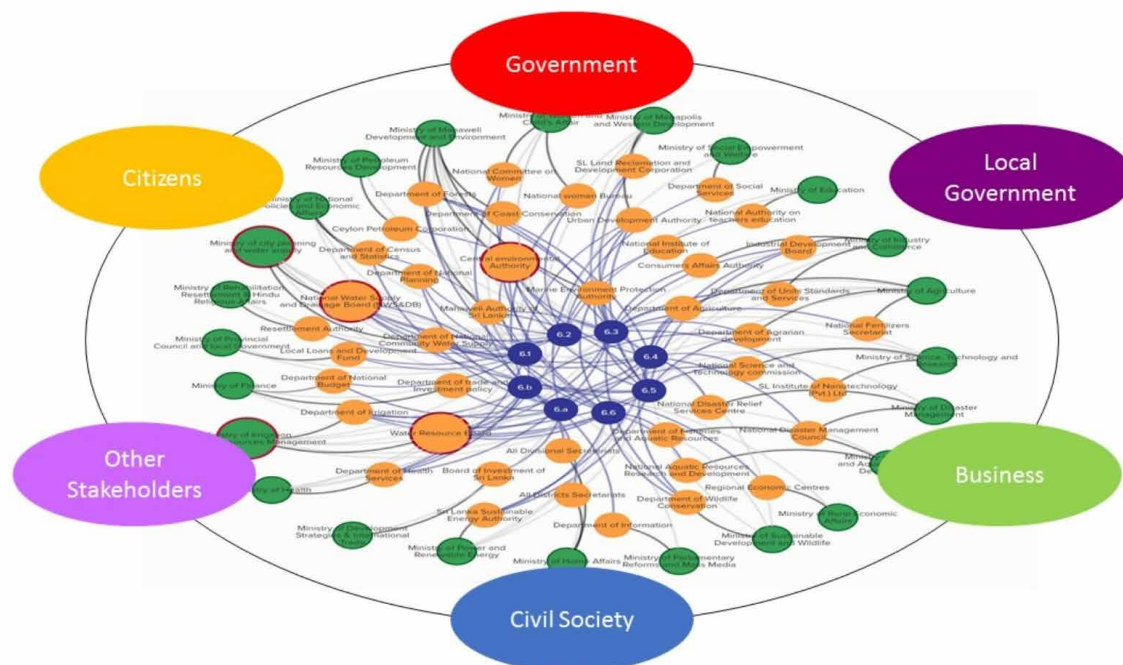
How was the ESCAP analytical framework applied in Sri Lanka, including institutional review, stakeholder involvement and consultations with relevant sub-sectors?

The National SDG 6 Workshop (in September 2016), organized by the Centre for Environment and Development (CED) in collaboration with the Ministry of Ministry of Sustainable Development and Wildlife and the Ministry of City Planning and Water Supply (MCPWS) reflected the participatory and consultative aspect of building a valid systems model. It mobilized broad stakeholder participation from international organizations, civil society, local NGOs and the public and private sectors, contributing to the formation of the SDG 6 Roadmap for Sri Lanka. Applying a systems thinking approach to Sri Lanka's water and sanitation development has resulted in awareness that implementing the eight SDG 6 targets will require collaborative commitment



from 43 agencies under 24 government ministries (figure 11). Keys to successful implementation include: (a) creating coherent and coordinated interagency institutional architecture for convergence planning, (b) integrated implementation, (c) political traction towards financial commitments, (d) inclusive planning and (e) embedding subsidiarity-based governance.

Figure 11. Systems mapping of agencies and stakeholder engagement



Source: Uchita de Zoysa, Sustainable Development Advisor, Ministry of Sustainable Development and Wildlife, 2016

A. What challenges were experienced and how were they addressed?

The empirical assumptions behind the systems thinking approach naturally led to statistical experiments in quantitative modelling to observe to what extent Sri Lanka's water and sanitation developments could be influenced by other causal variables and vice versa. A key challenge was the lack of available data specifically on indicators representing water renewability (SDG 6.3) and its sustainable management (SDG 6.5), which could hinder valid policymaking. This challenge was addressed in two ways. First, ESCAP provided training on the UN-Water's Integrated Monitoring Guide for SDG 6: Targets and Indicators, which informs ministries on how data collection can occur. Second, it became evident during the National SDG 6 Workshop that many of the Inter-agency and Expert Group's SDG indicators were not feasible under Sri Lanka's national context. As a result, stakeholders and policymakers consulted in small working groups to consider more valid indicators and how to approach data collection and analysis.

D. Outcomes of the modelling and analysis

Overview of the full aspirational model for sustainable water use in Sri Lanka

The systems model revealed a key insight that Sri Lanka's sustainable water use is dependent upon strategically mobilizing resource capacities and accountable ministerial policies, especially in water renewability. Encouraging official financial flows (SDG 10.b) can promote greater economic risk diversification (SDG 8.2) and inducing sustainable food production systems (SDG 2.4) and water-use efficiency in the agriculture sector (SDG 6.4). Official development assistance (SDG 10.b) can also increase international support for capacity building (SDG 17.9), which can influence water- and sanitation-related activities (SDG 6.a). Sri Lanka's policy coherence (SDG 17.14) affects pro-poor policy frameworks (SDG 1.b), which feeds into the development of stronger national institutions (SDG 16.6) and their participation in international cooperation (SDGs 16.8 and 17.16).



Simultaneously, sustaining economic growth (SDG 8.1) increases the coverage of pro-poor social protection systems (SDG 1.3), which can improve both access to safe drinking water (SDG 6.1) and sanitation (SDG 6.2), thus feeding into better practice of safe water renewability (SDG 6.3). Improved water quality (SDG 6.3) will reduce marine pollution (SDGs 14.1 and 14.2) and strengthen water-related ecosystems (SDGs 6.6 and 15.1), which will help cultivate stronger environmental integrity in Sri Lanka.

Critical interlinkages and impacts on the overall implementation of the model (key feedback loops)

There are three key feedback loops: (a) policy setting and governance transparency, (b) water resource availability and (c) resource efficiency. For Sri Lanka's national water and sanitation development, relevant and valid policy is critical because it establishes strategic ministerial coherence towards targeting a common social and environmental problem. It also encourages transparency of governance to prevent duplicity of efforts and capacity wastage. At its core, water resource availability, quality and renewability significantly impact multiple dimensions of Sri Lanka's development, including vital economic sectors (such as agriculture), poverty reduction and ecosystem integrity (terrestrial and marine). Finally, because Sri Lanka's main economic sector is agriculture (tea, rice, textiles), sustainable and efficient water resource use can induce green growth, which can lead to multidimensional development impacts.

Important cross-sections for short- and long-term interventions (key leverage points)

In the short term, Sri Lanka can benefit from targeted interventions to improve its national policy coherence (SDG 17.14), which can be done by strengthening inter-ministerial resource sharing and cooperation, especially on data and monitoring frameworks. This is already being pursued by mapping the key agencies responsible for the achievement of the SDG 6 targets. A longer-term strategy involves three additional interventions: to begin sustaining green economic growth (SDG 8.1) via water-use efficiency (SDG 6.4) and improved water quality (SDG 6.3) through comprehensive wastewater treatment, which can improve water renewability and access-related issues for society.

Edited by Ms. Karen Emmons.

Layout by Mr. Jeff Williams.