



COUNTRY PROFILE

MALDIVES

Maldives National Context for SCP and Connection to the Global Agenda

Situated in the South-Eastern Arabian Sea of the Indian Ocean, the Lakshadweep Sea, the Republic of Maldives consists of more than 1,000 coral islands, about 200 of which are inhabited, and an additional 80 that are tourist resorts. Only 1% of the country's territory is land mass, and the islands are dispersed across a huge area of ocean. This unique setting influences the Maldives' economy across all sectors and its environmental governance.

Sustainable management of marine environment and resources is a key political priority. The fishing industry is one of the most important sectors for the Maldivian economy. While there are initiatives that build capacity on sustainable fishing methods, including traditional techniques, stock assessments demonstrate that overfishing is an issue in the region, due to increases in fishing by numerous countries that operate in the shared ecosystem.

Tourism is another of the Maldives' most important economic sectors, contributing more than 23% to GDP in 2018. Annual visitors in 2019 amounted to 1,7 million, having doubled in sum over the past decade. Numerous resort islands have developed their own plans to ensure greater sustainability, including resource efficiency, circularity and

waste management. At the same time, Maldives strives to become a more affordable travel option by building up guesthouse infrastructure, particularly for tourists from India. To improve the sustainability of the tourism sector, policy frameworks need to be improved to reflect the increase in yearly visitors and changed strategy.

The Maldives is connected to the global agenda for sustainable consumption and production. Numerous ministries are working to implement the SDGs, including SDG 12 "Sustainable Consumption and Production" (SCP). While the Ministry of Environment and Energy is the lead for SDG 12 (waste department and environment department), other ministries have been involved as cluster co-leads as well as an SDGs Division for the Rapid Integrated Assessment of the SDGs, demonstrating a cross-ministerial process. In addition, the Republic of Maldives is also party to the South Asia Forum on Sustainable Consumption and Production which was founded by the Governing Council of the South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP) in 2015. As part of their commitment to SCP, the Maldives actively participate in the 10 YFP (One Planet Network) supporting SCP.

CHALLENGES

- The widely dispersed population makes it difficult to implement and monitor impacts of existing SCP-related policies.
- While Maldives has made some efforts to localise SDGs, the public does not have a strong understanding of the SDGs, especially SDG 12.
- The sustainable and sound management of waste poses as a significant challenge in terms of protecting human health and the environment. Waste management is complicated due to the highly dispersed population and lack of waste management infrastructure.
- Adoption by Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and Government entities of the best available technologies, environmental practices and innovations is uneven, especially as some islands (those with a greater focus on tourism) have more resources than others.
- Lack of technical expertise, particularly in terms of data collection and management, as well as development and implementation of SCP-relevant economic and policy instruments remains a major hurdle in the implementation of SDG 12 in the country.

PRIORITIES

In addition to responding to the challenges, there are key sectors that require attention and are crucial for the overall effectiveness of efforts on SCP and thus the long-term success of the SDG implementation including:

- Sustainable seafood value chains are crucial for the Maldives as seafood is one of the most traded food commodities in the country while global consumption has more than doubled since 1973.
- Tourism is of high relevance and SCP practices are deemed a priority, including energy efficiency, water and waste management.

- Waste management, specifically with regard to plastic waste and marine litter, has a significant impact on the Maldives as it is highly dependent of unspoiled ecosystems both for its fishery industry and tourism sector.
- Other key sectors include energy, water, agriculture, transport, industry, construction and Green Public Procurement.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Its unique situation as island nation can be seen as opportunity – there are few manufacturing sites for consumer products, therefore employment and market opportunities for Maldivian companies in manufacturing are of little concern. This means that the Maldivian government can directly steer the flow of imported goods, including those detrimental to environment or not in line with its SDG goals.
- Expansion of labelling and standards on fishery have been pursued by the Maldives; it was the first country in the Indian Ocean to receive Marine Stewardship Council certification for its pole-and-line skipjack fishery though the certification needs to be revisited by the country.
- Strengthening of Maldives as an eco-tourism destination is currently observable; known for its coral atolls, highly biodiverse ecosystems and unique natural features it is a favorite diving destination and therefore low-impact tourism has gained importance.



PROMISE

Prevention Of Marine Litter In The Lakshadweep Sea

Theme: Plastics

 India, Maldives, Sri Lanka

