

CSOs Review of National Accountability Mechanism for SDG 6

MALDIVES



6 CLEAN WATER
AND SANITATION



Table of Contents

Abbreviations	2
Executive Summary	3
Introduction.....	5
Country Context	5
Country Reporting and Commitments towards Implementing SDG6.....	6
WaterCare’s Commitments to Achieving SDG6	6
Accountability Mechanisms, Platforms or Systems	7
Need for Accountability Mechanisms for holding government accountable toward SDG6.....	7
Existing Accountability Mechanisms for holding government accountable toward SDG6.....	7
1. Strategic Action Plan (SAP)	8
2. National Water & Sewerage Policy (NWSP)	8
CSOs’ Participation in Accountability Mechanisms, Platforms or Systems	10
Current Accountability Mechanisms	12
Multi-stakeholder platforms and Steering/monitoring committee for overseeing the status of SDG6 implementation.....	14
Accountability Targets and Coverage.....	15
Status of country-level milestones.....	15
Current achievements	15
Gaps in achievement of targets.....	16
Positive Experiences of Participation in SDG Processes.....	17
Areas of Improvement	18
Good Accountability Practices	24
Conclusions and Recommendations	25
Appendices	28
Appendix 1: Methodology	28
Appendix 2: Number of respondents	28
Appendix 3: NGO Questionnaire	29
Appendix 4: Survey questions and discussion points.....	30

Abbreviations

CSO	Civil Society Organization
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
FANSA	Freshwater Action Network South Asia
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GoM	Government of Maldives
HLPF	High Level Political Forum
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
ME	Ministry of Environment
MFDA	Maldives Food and Drug Authority
MFMRA	Ministry of Fisheries Marine Resources and Agriculture
MNPI	Ministry of National Planning and Infrastructure
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOH	Ministry of Health
MWSC	Male' Water and Sewerage Company
NBS	National Bureau of Statistics
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NMCC	National Ministerial Coordination Committee
NWSP	National Water and Sewerage Policy
RIA	Rapid Integrated Assessment
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SMM	Sector Minister's Meeting
STELCO	State Electric Company Ltd
SWA	Sanitation and Water for All
VNR	Voluntary National Review
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Executive Summary

In continuation of the 2018 review of the National Accountability Mechanisms, the current study was proposed by IRC in association with FANSA, with an overall purpose of updating the SDG mapping study and collecting the latest information and data on the baseline information collected by an earlier survey. This assessment will also provide recommendations and suggestions to help determine the future course of action towards reaching SDG goals by 2030.

Following the adoption of SDGs in September 2015, steps taken towards the SDG agenda include national dialogues, public awareness and the setup of an institutional mechanism to coordinate SDGs by the Ministry of Environment (ME) in 2016. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), together with the Ministry of National Planning and Infrastructure (MNPI) are continuing identification of national priorities, a monitoring framework for SDG targets.

Maldives submitted VNR for HLPF on SDG in 2017, and planned for follow-up reporting on 2018 since the focal themes of the HPLF 2018 was WASH as encouraged by CSOs through the previous country-level assessment report in 2018. While the GoM did not report as expected, the ME participated in the High-level ministers Meeting in 2018. Later in 2019, the State Minister represented the Maldives at the Sector Ministers Meeting. WaterCare, on behalf of the Civil Society, tabled commitments for establishing and developing CSO networks, supporting multi-stakeholder engagement and promoting mechanisms facilitating CSOs role for establishing mutual accountability for SDG6 commitments.

Communication networks using social media have been developed by the SDG unit in ME for all SDGs. However, establishing CSO roles and mechanisms to hold government accountable on SDG commitments and progress is still conceptual. The participation of WASH stakeholders in this study was below that expected. This indicates the importance of increasing efforts to change the general mindset and culture among the stakeholders that is required to bring about the transformation needed to achieve SDG6.

Nevertheless, we are grateful for the MEs support in facilitating the stakeholder discussion which provided valuable information for this study. This demonstrated the value of government leadership in instilling collaborative behaviours among SDG stakeholders for realizing the goals by 2023.

Since the initial survey on status of accountability mechanisms in the country, the Multiparty parliamentary democratic model with the political parties funded by the government that influences the governance process through the parliamentary monitoring and accountability process has been found to be effective and can be extended for SDG6 monitoring through awareness creation among the public reaching the parliamentarians. The current

government's efforts through the parliament to decentralize development activities have a lot of potential for CSO involvement in accountability and supporting the SDG process. This process can be supported by strengthening the JMP and GLAAS process through the introduction of a people's report cards to help desks to bridge the gaps between stakeholder interaction and participation in WASH issues.

Development partners, as well as the Central and Local Governments need to be sensitized on the importance of CSO-based monitoring systems for a transformation to a new mindset, culture change and institutionalization of joint stakeholder monitoring and bottom-up accountability mechanism for tracking the government's progress on SDG6. This can be done by all parties, particularly the leadership such as GoM and the Development Partners adopting collaborative behaviours described in the Mutual Accountability Mechanism of SWA. In this sense, recently the government has demonstrated their support by extending the hand for establishing WASH multi-stakeholder advisory committee. CSOs are expectant that the resident Development Partners will follow this initiative of the government.

Introduction

The United Nations has adopted water as a priority for sustainable development. End Water Poverty (EWP) recently undertook a study on accountability mechanism for the implementation for Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6. Under the SDG monitoring and review framework, national governments are encouraged to provide a voluntary review on progress. In this follow-up SDG review, accountability goes beyond keeping track and giving an account on progress in the implementation of national sector activities for achieving water and sanitation-related targets of SDG 6. It also concerns the role of CSOs within accountability platforms and the power to set and influence the agenda of such platforms and systems.

In continuation with this review, the current study was proposed with an overall purpose of updating the SDG mapping study and collecting the latest information and data on the baseline information collected. This baseline information had been collected as part of the previous assessment identifying each country's standing in setting targets and alignment of SDG6 targets with national plans and policies, data collection and implementation, and to assess the status of national accountability mechanism and their functionality in tracking SDG6. This assessment will also provide recommendations and suggestions to help determine the course of actions required at various levels to achieve SDG6 with multi-stakeholder participation to support the Governments to achieve SDG6.

In this study, WaterCare is assisting IRC and FANSA in a joint study at strengthening CSO voice and role in achieving and maintaining universal access to water and sanitation services through the implementation of SDGs, by supporting the Government at various levels and to build strong accountability mechanisms. The methodology of the study can be found in Appendix 1.

Country Context

The Maldives, located south of India, covers an area of 859,000 sq. km. (including EEZ), and includes a total of 1,192 islands, 194 of which are inhabited. With a population of over 350,759 (2012 est.), the country has a life expectancy of 73.8 years, and in terms of infant mortality, 9 per 1000 of births are live. Literacy rate is 98.2%. The country's GDP was USD 2,292 million (Maldives Monetary Authority, 2013), GDP per capita was USD 6,567 (World Bank, 2013), and Inflation was 10.8 percent (2012) (Vision 2013 – 2018).

As a Small Island Developing State (SIDS), the Maldives faces significant economic, social and environmental challenges exacerbated by the impacts from climate change, vulnerability and high costs associated with the nature of SIDS.

Country Reporting and Commitments towards Implementing SDG6

Following the adoption of SDGs in September 2015, steps taken towards SDG agenda by the Maldives include the setup of an institutional mechanism to coordinate SDGs under the ME in 2016 which has now been placed under the Ministry of Planning and Infrastructure by the current government.

National Ministerial Coordination Committee (NMCC), constituted of cabinet ministers, oversees the implementation of SDGs in the country and has the authority to make the final policy decisions. The NMCC, previously chaired by the ME, is now led by the MNPI.

The previous study in 2018 identified the Water and Sewerage Policy developed by the ME for implementing SDG6. Since then, ME has also followed up with the development of an SDG communication strategy.

In 2017, Maldives submitted a Voluntary National Review (VNR) to the UN High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) for SDG. While it was planned to report on SDG6 in the 2018 HLPF, no voluntary report submitted on SDG6. However, the ME participated in Sector Ministers Meeting in April 2018. WaterCare, on behalf of the Maldivian CSOs, tabled the following commitments in absentia. The commitments reflect current CSOs' position and our optimism to harness the community's potential as a force to affect government accountability for SDG6 commitments.

WaterCare's Commitments to Achieving SDG6

1. Widely disseminate information among sectoral and non-sectoral stakeholders on achieving SDG6 by 2030.
2. Obtain commitment of 10 CSOs and support of Development Partners for accountability on SDG6 implementation and progress.
3. In 2019, collaborate with other CSOs to adopt the CSO SDG6 Strategy developed in 2018, led by WaterCare.
4. Develop awareness programs to advocate for stronger monitoring of SDG6 and the involvement of CSOs in GLAAS and JMP report.
5. Work towards establishment of a help desk on improving access to water and sanitation in the Maldives. Work to establish Citizens Report Card on water and sanitation access, water safety, water security.

Accountability Mechanisms, Platforms or Systems

Need for Accountability Mechanisms for holding government accountable toward SDG6

Currently, the government is building water and sewerage infrastructure in communal islands at a rapid speed. Most of these are funded by the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and bilateral assistance. The EPA has been tasked with licensing and monitoring water and sewerage utilities. However, there is a lack of monitoring of the operational and environmental effects and the economic implications of these projects. Information on operational efficiency, environmental performance, and technological fit for purpose needs to be reviewed for all the WASH schemes under operation, to ensure that future projects are planned, designed and operated on a sustainable basis.

The development of WASH schemes requires the procurement of heavy infrastructure and investments. The GoM generally follows international procurement practices endorsed by the World Bank and Asian Development Bank, utilising project tendering models such as that of the International Federation of Consulting Engineers (FIDIC). In the Maldives, in recent media, corruption in public procurement has been identified by several institutions, including the president. Several public officials and institutions are being investigated for procurement irregularities and allegations of corruption related to infrastructure projects.

To enhance the mechanisms within the ME, WASH Policy and WASH Program Implementation has been separated, with the WASH Policy remaining the responsibility of ME, and the WASH Program Implementation being transferred to the MNPI in 2019, under the new government. The ME are currently working towards introducing A Water Act and a related Water Regulations and Guidelines.

Existing Accountability Mechanisms for holding government accountable toward SDG6

Existing government accountability mechanisms on SDG6 progress tend to be government centric. For instance, In June 2019, the GoM established an independent procurement review committee to oversee public procurement. However more and more opportunities are being provided to the community, through redress mechanisms under the GEF funded WASH projects. These include stakeholder consultation at the commencement as well as during the construction stage of all WASH infrastructure schemes being built in the islands. Daily Environmental Social Monitoring under this program generates a huge stack of electronic as well as hard data that needs to be managed and converted to usable information using modern data management tools.

Currently, the Maldives does not have an existing community-based accountability mechanism on SDG6.

Current national and state linkages and mechanisms to achieve the SDG goals aligning the target as described by the ME are as follows:

1. Strategic Action Plan (SAP)

The Strategic Action Plan (SAP) of the GoM is a central policy framework and planning document that guides the overall development direction of the Maldives for the next five years (2019 – 2023). The SAP consolidates the current government's manifesto pledges with existing sectoral priorities. It serves as the main implementation and monitoring tool for tracking the progress of the delivery of government policies and development priorities. The SAP was formally rolled out into the government's day to day operations on 1 October 2019. The SAP will also be a key policy document towards the ministry's efforts to achieve SDGs. While the SDGs are set for the year 2030, the policies and strategies in the SAP are aligned for the achievement of these goals. It opens new opportunities for the Government of Maldives to improve the alignment of external assistance to national priorities in line with the Paris Declaration. Hence, the SAP will, therefore, be used as a tool for improving aid coordination and in leveraging external assistance which will complement domestic resources to finance the SAP.

2. National Water & Sewerage Policy (NWSP)

The primary objective of the NWSP is to develop tools for the sound management of water resources, and the water and sewerage sector, to encourage enhanced informed decision making and guide overall development of the sector.

The policy aims to bring the private sector and the general public together in managing, conserving, and protecting the valuable water resources in order to satisfy present needs as well as those of future generations. The NWSP document is aligned with the Articles 22: Protection of the Environment and 23: Economic and Social Rights of the Constitution of Maldives, and is consistent with the global and regional consensus embodied in Goal 6 of UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and other regional commitments.

Further, the ME confirmed during the focus group meeting their recommendations for determining priorities and actions required at various levels with regards to SDG6 implementation as follows:

- Implement a sustainable assessment system about the performance of the sector and the utilities

- Strengthen annual Joint Sector Review process through development of an online monitoring tool that can regularly update and monitor progress against SDG targets
- Establish multi-stakeholder working arrangements, strengthen nationwide SDG awareness.

CSOs' Participation in Accountability Mechanisms, Platforms or Systems

There is limited community participation in community consultations on infrastructure projects (MEE 2018 – Maldives Country Paper, SACOSAN VII), such as those held at the commencement stage of concept designs, and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) processes; women's participation is especially lower, in spite of the government's intent of making such consultations more inclusive. Apart from demands for better infrastructure, community interest in WASH problems is low. Additionally, in a recent public consultation held for EIA review to which the Author attended, participants voiced concerns over lack of access to the EIA being discussed in spite of repeated requests to the EPA as well as the information commissioner through the RTI process.

More significant problems persist, however, in the areas of efficient operation and maintenance, water security and quality assurance as well as other governance-related issues and financial sustainability; people are not aware of these, since the financial burden of capital and operation is shouldered by the Government. Unlike many South Asian countries, the water and sanitation issues of the Maldives are not as obvious, such as having to walk miles to fetch water or deal with open defecation. Rather, the Maldivian challenges are related to regulating and ensuring the quality of water, increasing water security and water safety, and building climate resilience, for which sound governance is paramount. There is a lack of CSO awareness on the risks of lack of awareness on these issues. This awareness is needed to attract and incentivize the community to demand for improvements in promoting related professions, creating jobs and development of related industries.

In the initial review, participants from the government expressed that the government's openness to CSOs monitoring their progress and publishing their own shadow reports if they believe that there is mismanagement of government funds and delayed progress on project progress. They also expressed their belief that stakeholder consultation Meetings for any project is a good platform for CSOs to provide feedback on the implementation of the project, and to engage in monitoring its progress. It was also highlighted in the interview that, although there are opportunities for CSOs to hold the government accountable, very few CSOs are active in this role in the Maldives. The recent Global Climate Action Strike, in which local enthusiasts advocating against single-use plastic in bottled water production and distribution in the Maldives including waste disposal, showed the enthusiasm of the youth towards sustainable development and their readiness to demand government accountability in the face of Climate Change as appropriate for low lying small islands in the Maldives. This shows latent CSO potential for undertaking the role of holding the GoM accountable for SDG commitments.

The lack of matured CSOs is a bottleneck restraining the potential for CSOs to hold the government accountable for sector progress. As shown in Figure 1, 43.16% of respondents in the review either disagreed or strongly disagreed that CSOs are currently given adequate opportunities in supporting the government through social awareness, advocacy, and other activities.

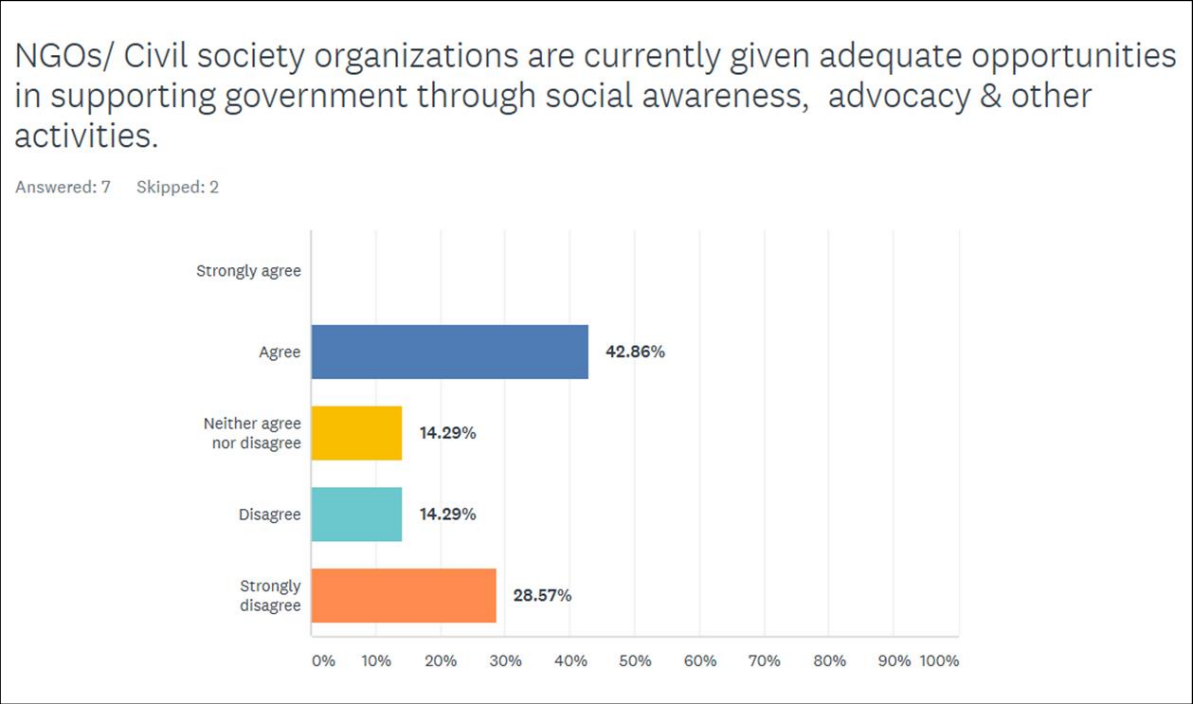


Figure 1: NGO Response to a survey question on opportunities for CSO engagement in supporting the government

Hence, there is a need for more CSOs with strong governance structures; who can present a justified, strong case for accountability on the progress made by the government. This can enhance CSOs role in holding the government accountable for sector progress. Such CSOs could utilize national and international conventions in their respective sectors to raise issues in governance and enhance public awareness of any obstacles and how they can hold the government accountable. Even though there is no official capacity in which CSOs could participate to hold the government accountable, there is room for CSO to improve their participation in government projects in all sectors of the SDGs.

Seventy-three percent of NGO respondents said that there are no platforms or opportunities created for influencing the government on SDG accountability (Figure 2). The same percentage of respondents also thought that NGOs are not being involved in steering committees or in other Meetings related to SDG6 (Figure 3). When asked to list three activities undertaken by these platforms/networks towards achieving the targets set by the Government. Nine

responded to this question and the key listings are: "Some Meetings have been held". "None", "Don't know", "Not aware."

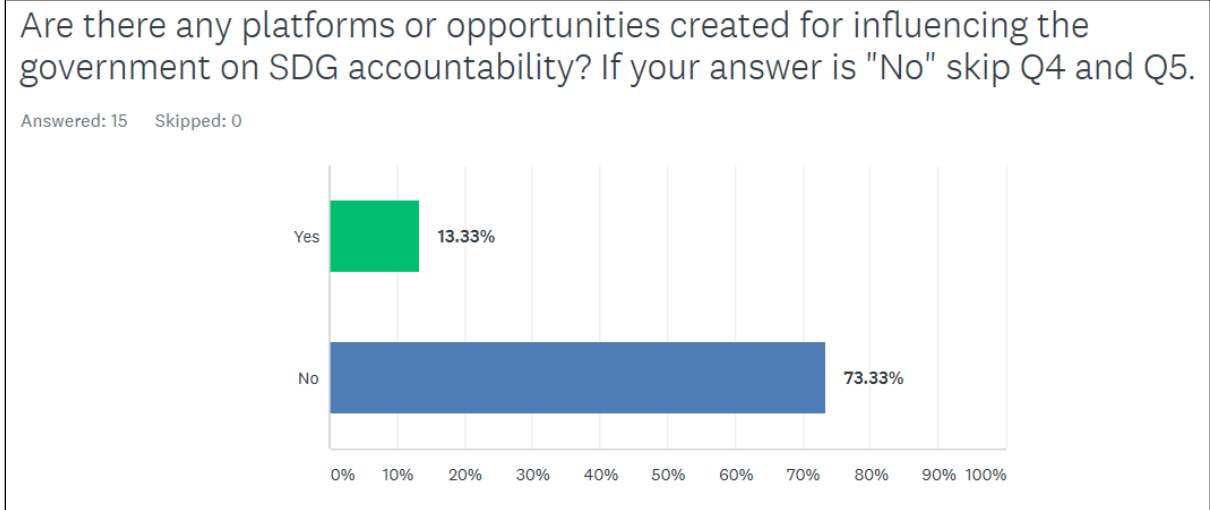


Figure 2: NGO Response to a survey question on platforms available for CSOs for influencing the government on SDG accountability

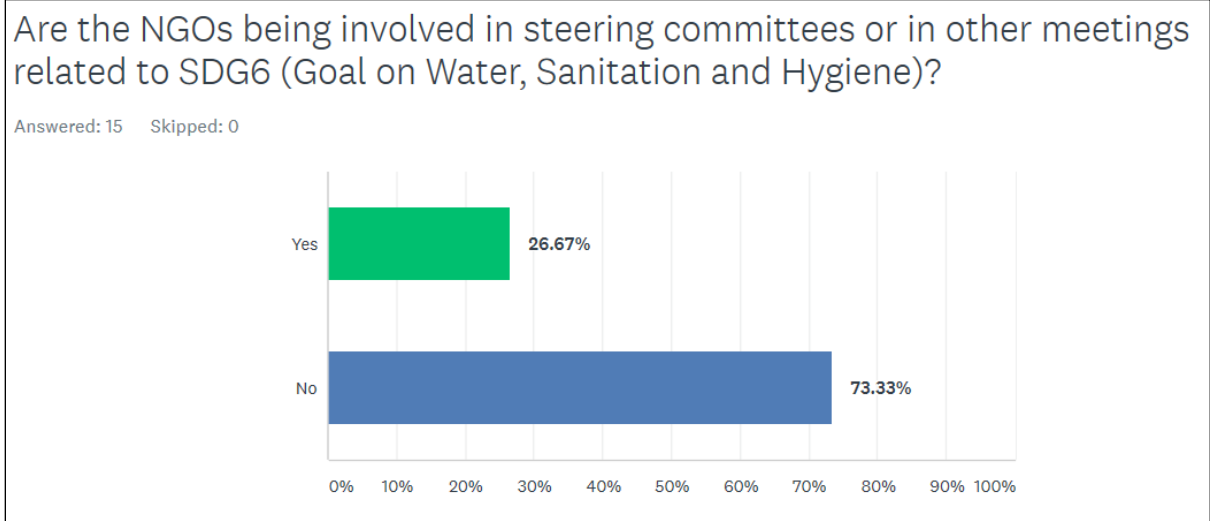


Figure 3: NGO Response to a survey question on the level of CSOs engagement in policy-level committees related to SDG6

Current Accountability Mechanisms

When NGOs were asked about the effectiveness of existing networks and platforms towards achieving the national SDG targets, 45% of respondents said that they strongly disagree, with 36% disagreeing and 9% giving a neutral response (neither agree nor disagree) (Figure 4).

The existing networks and platforms are effective towards achieving the national SDG targets.

Answered: 11 Skipped: 4

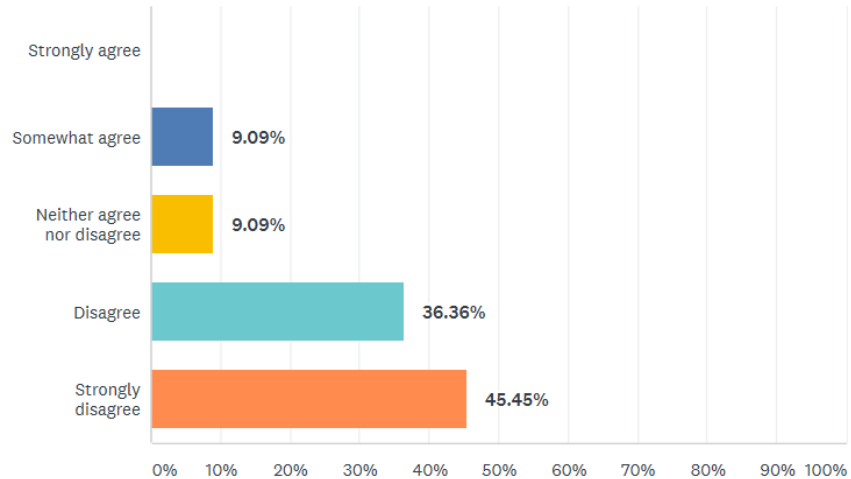


Figure 4: NGO Response to survey question on the effectiveness of existing networks in achieving national-level SDG targets.

According to the VNR 2017 report, the country recognizes the importance of stakeholder engagement and participation in the substantive realization of SDGs. In this regard, the emphasis has been made to create awareness and engage stakeholders throughout the SDGs process, including implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.

CSOs seem reluctant to engage in dialogue concerning the development of accountability mechanisms for community participation in SDG monitoring to address issues such as the need for a formal framework for engagement, mutual trust-building. Collaboration among CSOs is important as we call upon the government to leave the silo system facilitating discussion and data sharing among WASH-related sectors for pushing SDG 6 efforts forward.

The review suggests that CSOs perceive participation as a prerequisite for project ownership, successful implementation, and sustainability, which provides purpose to their engagement efforts. From the implementors angle, the participants of the focus group Meeting agreed that participation does not mean acceptance of all ideas from diverse groups.

Priority actions with regard to SDG6 implementation: Following comments were provided by NGOs as necessary for the implementation of SDGs:

-Community engagement and empowerment in the provision, as well as regional level continual data collection and research-based solution orientation.

-to ensure sustainable affordable options are facilitated rather than expensive unsustainable models be introduced.

-None..., Details not given to public...., We need better monitoring system them awareness”

-The National Goals are listed in the National Water and Sewerage Policy document compiled by the Ministry of Environment. There is no transparency and information available on the implementation of the policy strategies and achievements

-“Educate and Make it inclusive, smaller islands are often forgotten; No idea, Not relevant to the Maldives”

Multi-stakeholder platforms and Steering/monitoring committee for overseeing the status of SDG6 implementation

As stated in the ME's 2017 NWSP (p. 44), the responsibilities of NGOs and CSOs are as follows:

- Dissemination of information about the importance of water protection and conservation
- Provide information on improved sewerage systems and its services

This suggests NGOs/CSOs role as recipients of information, rather than active agents in implementing the SDG6 action plan.

However, ME is currently working on forming a National Coordination Committee for WASH including all sector players, of which WaterCare serves as a CSO representative. Currently, a Terms of Reference (TOR) is being drafted to finalize the mandate of the committee. The formation of such a water steering committee composed of participants of lead agencies and a variety of public and private sector stakeholders is one of the recommendations stated in World Bank's 2013 report on Combating Water Insecurity in the Maldives.

A framework for a robust and inclusive mutual accountability mechanism and for constituting an actively functioning multi-stakeholders' platform at the national level is being proposed by the government as follows:

1. Development of proper monitoring and evaluation of Key Performance Indicators (KPI) of SDG, NWSP.

- Incorporation of a nationwide database for all relevant stakeholders to share and view data in order to make informed decisions.

Participation is an approach through which beneficiaries and other stakeholders are able to influence project planning, decision-making, implementation and monitoring. The ME identified the sector players at national and state levels who are included or jointly working towards these goals as Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Health, Environment Protection Agency (EPA), Local government authority, Ministry of Education, Ministry of National Planning and Infrastructure, Ministry of Finance, National Bureau of Statistics, National Disaster Management Authority, Ministry of Islamic Affairs.

Accountability Targets and Coverage

Claude Ake defines accountability "Is equal access to the decision-making process rather than approval of the substantive decision by everyone, which satisfies the right to self-government".

Status of country-level milestones

The status of country-level milestone targets and indicators are based on percent population coverage of household piped wastewater connections to public sewer in individual islands. The government's strategic target translates to having 100% coverage of improved sanitation access by 2023. During the Focus Group meeting, the ME representative stated that national development plans are being prepared to achieve these targets in alignment with SDGs.

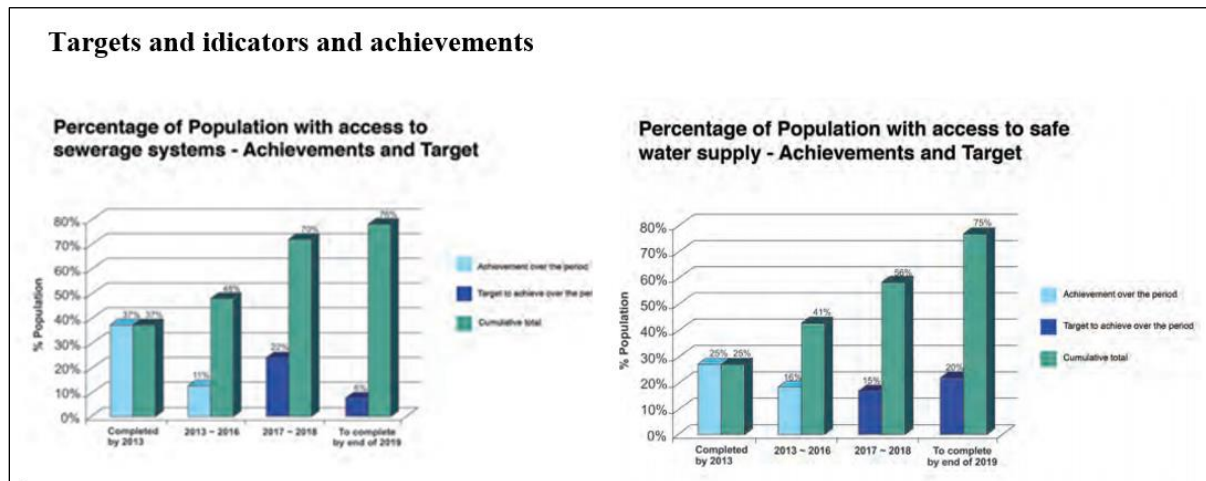


Figure 5: Targets, Indicators, and achievements of Water and Sewerage Facilities (pg. 6-7, National Water and Sewerage Policy 2017, Ministry of Environment)

Current achievements

Coverage, quality, and reliability of water and sanitation for all

The following information was provided by representatives from the ME at the focus group meetings. There are challenges in monitoring and reporting on

current achievements in quality and reliability. Approximately 68% of the total country population have access to improved sanitation coverage. Seventy-one islands have access to improved sanitation facilities, and the piped sewerage systems of 52 islands are either contracted or on-going while, the rest are under financing. Additionally, fifty-one percent of the country's population has access to water through metered house connections; that is 36 islands out of 187. Water supply projects in 41 islands are either contracted or ongoing, while the rest are in different stages of financing.

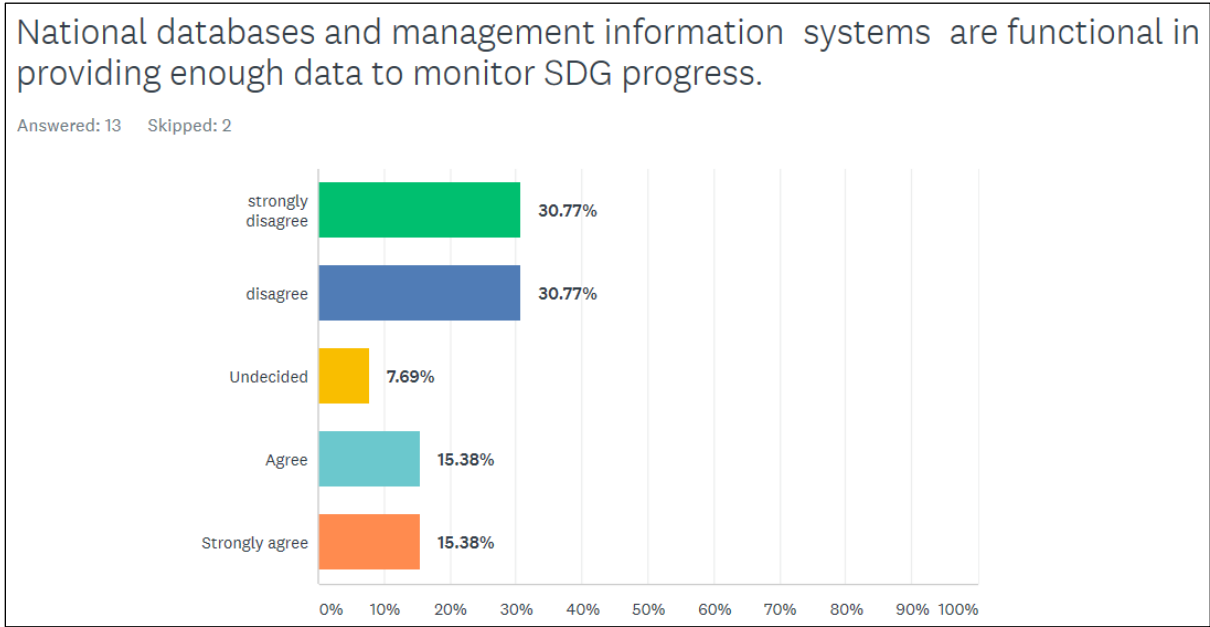


Figure 6: NGO Response to survey question on the functionality of national MIS in monitoring progress on SDGs.

Gaps in achievement of targets

In consideration of the gaps between SDGs and the targets fixed at national/state levels, there has not been any formal identification. Further, the ME has stated that currently there is no results framework for measuring SDG indicators. However, they recognise the need to develop a proper framework for monitoring and evaluation of KPIs of SDG and NWSP. The MNPI is currently working on such a framework to monitor SDG progress.

The ME provided the details of data/records of evidence on the SDG indicators, including parameters measured at different levels (i.e., island to national). For instance, at the national level, this included the number of island-wide water and sewerage systems completed and water quality reports produced to ensure compliance with the national guidelines as published in the EPA website.

Positive Experiences of Participation in SDG Processes

The ME is currently working on forming a National Coordination Committee for WASH, with the purpose of providing guidance and direction in sustainable use of water and health aspects relevant to the implementation of SDG6. WaterCare has been invited to serve as the CSO representative on this committee.

Additionally, WaterCare has been appointed as the SWA Country Civil Society Focal Point in Maldives. Through this role, we have been introduced to tools such as mutual accountability and adapting these and sharing them with relevant stakeholders. For instance, in a recent NGO fair, we were able to translate this information and share it with the general public through a poster. In this activity, we were able to engage Youth volunteers, who participated in providing explanations to the public verbally, as well as through Media. WaterCare also participated in a panel discussion at this event, along with other NGOs, where we had the opportunity to discuss SDG6. Additionally, we explained these mechanisms of mutual accountability to the President of Maldives, and the Minister of Economic Development, and an executive team, including the Managing Director, of the leading water utility company's executive team.

These roles have therefore allowed for WaterCare's role to expand in the field, providing a means to talk more substantially about SDG6 and relevant issues. Through them, WaterCare has been able to recognise an area in which substantial work can be done. For instance, through our role as the SWA country focal point, we developed commitments towards achieving SDG6, which has driven us forward resulting in activities such as the establishment of the WaterCare Help Desk that will continue to have a positive impact on the community.

Areas of Improvement

In response to the identification of corruption in public procurement highlighted previously, open tendering and e-Procurement are globally popular options that the civil society would like to explore. The Model Law of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) on Public Procurement contains procedures and principles aimed at achieving value for money and avoiding abuses in the procurement process. UNCITRAL was established by the United Nations General Assembly by its Resolution 2205 (XXI) of 17 December 1966 "to promote the progressive harmonization and unification of international trade law". In many countries, almost half of the community water supply is lost to unmonitored leakages and wasteful operation.

This potential of loss and inefficiency is one of the numerous reasons why establishing mechanisms for service recipients at the bottom of the value chain to hold the rights providers accountable in the achievement of SDG6 is necessary. Water and sanitation are a complex system, cross-cutting other issues such as human rights and economic and environmental sustainability.

Existing government accountability mechanisms on SDG6 progress tend to be government centric. For instance, In June 2019, the GoM established an independent procurement review committee to oversee public procurement. However, more and more opportunities are being provided to the community, through redress mechanisms under the GEF funded WASH projects. These include stakeholder consultation at the commencement as well as during the construction stage of all WASH infrastructure schemes being built in the islands. Daily Environmental Social Monitoring under this program generates a huge stack of electronic as well as hard data. While this, and other similar data exists in the country, due to the existence of different institutions and organisation in silos, currently such information is often inaccessible across institutions. Therefore, the existing data needs to be shared through a common data platform, preferably at the National Bureau of Statistics, under the Ministry of Finance, who have also been proposed as a member for the National WASH Coordination Committee. This data can be converted into usable information using research, discussions, and conferences.

CSOs initiative to hold governments accountable for development is still at nascent stage in the development sector. However current government is vocal in inviting CSOs to join in the monitoring and accountability roles. Therefore, the next step is to establish multi-stakeholder engagement platforms and mechanisms to allow for collaboration of Government and CSOs.

As the government prepares for the development of indicators, indicator frameworks, and accountability mechanisms, it is important for the civil society to be aware of the importance of accountability for the SDGs, the

characteristics of an appropriate accountability system and how to go about developing one. According to the UN CDP Background Report (2015) the success of the post-2015 development agenda depends on designing a robust accountability system for the global goals adopted for sustainable development, and the involvement of all stakeholders in the accountability framework. SDG16.6 is requires the “development of effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels” while 16.10 requires to “ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms in accordance with national legislation and international agreements”.

According to UNCTAD report, an accountability framework for SDG6 needs to rest on the following critical principles to orient the creation of accountability mechanisms:

1. Subsidiarity

Issues ought to be addressed at the lowest level capable of addressing them. Thus, national governments are held to account for the inter-state relations they enter into, as well as for their participation in international forums of cooperation. To overcome the lack of horizontal accountability at the international level, strong ties to national accountability frameworks should be established. These ties should be supported by active international and national social accountability.

2. Coherence

This principle calls for building a genuine, mutually reinforcing system among existing accountability mechanisms, for establishing linkages and complementarities among them to avoid inconsistency and duplication of efforts.

3. Result-oriented commitments

Specific commitments and associated responsibilities of all actors, i.e. national governments, development partners, civil society and private firms need to be defined. The requirement that all positions of authority should have clearly defined duties and performance standards would enable their behaviour to be assessed objectively and transparently. This is therefore a necessary prerequisite for both answerability and incentives to comply.

4. Inclusiveness and transparency

Global governance institutions need to be representative of, and accountable to, the entire community. Moreover, decision-making procedures need to be democratic, inclusive and transparent.

5. Political system

Government-funded parties established should ensure government accountability in democratic governance. Similarly, it would be in alignment

with SDG for governments to support CSOs by creating an enabling environment through financial, legal and political support.

CSOs SDG6 Strategy Plan provides for forming cohesive networks capable in order to undertake the function of holding the government accountable on behalf of the greater community. The follow-up CSO commitments to the SMM in 2019 in Costa Rica identifies the introduction of tools such as Citizens Report Cards, Community WASH access help desk linked to GLAAS and JMP process as means of engagement in the CSO monitoring and evaluation process.

The table below outlines specific factors identified, the current situation, and the improvement needed to address it:

Factor	Current Situation	Improvement Needed
Political support for multisectoral collaboration in SDG6.	The new government has established the Ministry of Planning and Infrastructure Development for coordinating GoMs development Agenda, including SDG.	We found no reference to the SDG department in the Planning Ministry website; it is important for the SDG department to be visible and proactive. A relevant Collaborative model is described in IWRM; sectoral public entities. Efforts of the Ministry of Environment, EPA, Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Tourism, Environmental Protection Agency, Government-owned or part-owned Water Utilities needs to be streamlined for effective SDG implementation. The structure of an ideal IWRM system comprises of creation of an enabling environment, institutional frameworks, and management structure; the practical arrangements for the local conditions need to be assessed among stakeholders as we progress towards the achievement of SDG6 by 2030.
Access to data required	Participants at the Focus Group Workshop	Documented knowledge: With numerous water and sewerage

Factor	Current Situation	Improvement Needed
for SDG6 progress monitoring	discussed the reluctance of governmental organizations to sharing data amongst themselves. This was to demonstrate the hurdles which the CSOs are confronted with in accessing information for SDG monitoring under the current scenario, in spite of the enactment of the Right to Information Law in Maldives 3 years back.	<p>projects being implemented by the government using designs based on detailed analytical information on existing conditions, each design report has high research value. The WASH schemes upon commissioning handed over to licensed operators generate numerous data which can be fed for research and development for improving future project designs. A process to share this data and create more knowledge out of them would be to have this data accessible to industry players via discussions, debates, seminars and conferences. The output of which can be made available on and offline and also in libraries. Relevant information in governmental departments and ministries relating to WASH needs to be managed and shared in order to feed the policy and planning process and design of facilities for service provision together with SDG6 progress monitoring.</p> <p>Design and establishment of appropriate mechanisms for data management and proactive sharing and fostering knowledge creation using existing systems.</p>
Alignment with national processes and structures	In 2017, ME launched the National Water and Sewerage Policy (NWSP), aligned with SDGs. The policy was followed by the SDG	<p>The related governance structures and processes need to be aligned with the sector development plan set by the GoM.</p> <p>The NWSP will be one of the bases</p>

Factor	Current Situation	Improvement Needed
	Communication Strategy, published in 2018. Currently the ME is working towards the development of a Water Act and a National Plumbing Code.	for progress monitoring and accountability for SDG6 achievement by 2030. An important step in this work will be to harmonize it with the SAP recently published by the President's Office, Agenda 19 of the current Government.
Means and level of private sector and CSO engagement in SDG6 monitoring	Lack of active CSOs and limited involvement of CSOs and private sector organisations in the WASH sector.	A wide range of stakeholders need to be actively involved in the roles of monitoring and bottom-up accountability. Incentive driven accountability mechanisms can be established as means and tools of engagement. Using existing tools and success models of other countries in the region, the next round of workshops needs to be geared towards the objectives of designing and establishing joint monitoring, citizens report cards, more effective GLAAS processes. These require culture change of GoM empowering CSO for taking up effective roles for state accountability for SDG 6 implementation.
Financial resources	Lack of recourses for the creation of an enabling environment for CSO engagement mechanisms	Allocation of government funds and facilitating access to technical assistance for creating enabling environments for HR mobilization, capacity building, mentoring and incentivizing CSOs to take up effective roles for purposeful participation in the SDG monitoring and accountability process within a transparent governance framework.

Factor	Current Situation	Improvement Needed
Inter-sectoral monitoring and awareness creation	Establishment of SDG6 intersectoral monitoring team	Team made up of the SDG6 focal point, the leads of the technical teams and representatives from the national statistics office working with monitoring and data across indicators and sectors, to facilitate learning, and support integrated data analysis and use for policy- and decision-making.
Data for evidence-based policy and decision making	Lack of availability of comprehensive data for evidence-based policy- and decision-making, in support of integrated water resources management.	To strengthen this, policy- and decision-makers could be appointed to coordinate the monitoring process (e.g. the SDG 6 focal point and the leads of each indicator-specific technical team).
Monitoring and supporting evidence-based policy and decision making	Politicians appreciate the importance of monitoring and supporting it accordingly.	There is a need for closing the gap between policy and implementation through the development of mechanisms for SDG6 implementation monitoring, data capture, management and data sharing. To gain political support it is important for CSOs to advocate how policy- and decision-making can be improved by having access to high quality data, i.e. the social and economic return of investment in monitoring.

Good Accountability Practices

While there is no fully-fledged accountability platform in the Maldives, there are signs that the country is improving and establishing good practices. These can be adapted to or joined to the WASH sector. For instance, Transparency Maldives has undertaken an accountability activity in the form of a study on climate financing.

The Parliament of the Maldives has been closely monitoring WASH in islands and have been holding ministers accountable to answer in sessions open to the public.

Additionally, a Water Act, that has been in discussion for the last decade has been submitted to the parliament for the second time. This has given civil society and other stakeholders a window for advocacy, to strengthen the accountability process.

Furthermore, a Water Utility Regulation bill is also being debated in the parliament. Additionally, with the local council elections coming up, decentralisation could in the future contribute to continued good practice.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Currently, there is no existing community-based accountability mechanism on SDG6 in the Maldives. Considering the national trend for commercial water operators to provide water and sanitation utility services in the absence of a Water Act, water regulation and citizens' role in the accounting process is critical to foster institutions, processes and the building of human capital for the successful delivery of SDG6 by 2030.

The Social Network recognized by CSO SDG6 Strategy Plan during the workshops can be developed into an independent and self-led CSO networks. The purpose of this network could be for advancing SDG6 implementation agenda, as directed by community-based leadership with a clear focus on strategic activities and methods of approach towards meaningful participation in monitoring and accountability roles for the success of SDG6 by 2030.

However, with participation, there is a need to combine local and intellectual knowledge; care must be taken so that intellectual knowledge does not influence that of the locals. This requires the wholehearted engagement of the project implementors, consultants, contractors, service providers, and regulators as well as the community. This can ensure collaborative decision-making between these parties, hence building ownership and fostering the successful progress of SDG6 activities, while avoiding confusion and deadlock in various stages of system delivery.

Additionally, there are no CSO based accountability mechanisms in Maldives, and the CSO turnout for this study was far below expectations. Further, the interventions made by invitees and participants indicate the need for awareness and engagement on WASH issues among CSOs with support of the government and development partners to ensure necessary funding and strategies for awareness and engagement. There are no known activities being carried out for formation of accountability frameworks and mechanisms for government accountability to CSOs on progress of SDG6.

There is also a shortage of demand for the creation of such CSO initiatives in the community. The development partners as well as government institutes need to be sensitized on the importance of CSO-based monitoring systems for the transformation. This call for envisioning is in alignment with SDG and formation of a new mindset, culture change and institutionalization of CSO based monitoring and bottom-up government accountability mechanism for tracking progress on SDG6.

Information and disclosure systems need to be reviewed critically with meaningful engagement of civil society. This requires the promotion of CSO networks, and incentivisation of good governance within these networks and systems to engage professionally with multi-stakeholders amongst tension

between the social, economic and environmental needs for sustainability. This could be pursued via multi-stakeholder collaboration to bring about equitable solutions in the WASH sector, as outlined in the table below.

Initiatives and Action points	Responsible Party	Support Institutions
Assist SDG6 stakeholder partnership networks formulate an accountability mechanism for monitoring governments progress towards SDG6.	SDG Division/MNPI, CSOs	Development Partners, SDG Technical committee, Development Partners
Make use of existing technology and social media to generate and manage WASH information and data. This includes output documents of SDG workshops and related studies as they are produced.	SDG Division MNPI, CSOs, WASH Utility Companies	SDG Development Partners, SDG Technical committee
Incentivize effective stakeholder engagement in national SDG accountability mechanisms to be developed. Make use of social media and technology innovation to increase transparency and national accountability on progress toward SDG6.	SDG Div. CSOs	WASH multi stakeholder institutions, Development Partners
Awareness and capacity building plans need to be integrated into Water Strategy Planning.	NMCC, Technical SDG Committee	CSOs, WASH Utility Companies SDG Division
Initiate a mechanism to assess NWSP 2017, formulate advocacy strategies for addressing gaps for achieving SDG6.	CSOs, NGOs	ME, development. Partners
Develop strategic plans for capacity building of WASH stakeholders to	ME, MNPI SDG Div.	CSOs, WASH Utility Companies

Initiatives and Action points	Responsible Party	Support Institutions
undertake their roles in monitoring/ execution of their SDG6 commitments.		
Establish a multi-disciplinary (including civil society) Water Advisory Committee be formed, to direct the National Water and Sanitation and Solid Waste Program.	ME, SDG Div.	MNPI, NMCC, Technical SDG Committee
Empower MNPI, MFMRA, water regulator (EPA), HPA, MFDA and promote inter sectoral collaboration for active involvement in the SDG6 accountability process- to strengthen WASH governance.	ME, MNPI, MFMRA, NMCC, Technical SDG Committee, SDG Div.	NMCC, EPA, HPA, MFDA
Promote inter-sectoral collaboration (health, environmental, agriculture, tourism, CSOs) in IWRM	ME, MFA, MOH ME, MT	CSOs, WHO, UNICEF, UNDP
Strengthen SDG partnership network to become an enabling force capable of taking up the role of holding state accountable for SDG 6 implementation in accordance with WASH strategy action plans under IWRM.	NMCC, Technical SDG Committee , SDG Div., ME CSOs	WASH intersectoral organisations, MNPI Development partners
Create mechanisms for data management on SDG6 comprising of selection of indicators and targets, data collection, data processing, data storage, data sharing both online and offline, research and development, seminars and conferences.	SDG Div. and Water D./ME, NBS, MoH, MFMRA, Civil Society	Development partners, MNU and other Educational institutes

Appendices

Appendix 1: Methodology

In-country data collection in the following order:

1. Consultation of existing databases and reports (secondary sources)
2. Based on the consultation of secondary sources and the expertise in the country, representatives of WASH sectoral and non-sectoral stakeholders one to one discussions were conducted.
3. Implementation of a questionnaire (online survey) to selected actors (see attached) sent to NGO groups on Viber and WhatsApp groups reaching 100% of registered NGOs.
4. Based on the results of the questionnaires, conducted in-depth discussion with representatives of the ME Water Department, UNDP, Water Care (NGO), SDG Division of Ministry of National Planning and Infrastructure.
5. Draw up a summary report on the findings.
6. Study report comprising of all of the above inputs was generated.

Appendix 2: Number of respondents

No of electronic questioners answered: 16

No. of semi structured interviews conducted: 15

No of participants in the Focus Group Discussion: 7

Appendix 3: NGO Questionnaire

1. 1.What are the current roles of NGOs/ civil society organizations in contributing towards achievement of national SDG goals?
2. 2.Are the NGOs being involved in steering committees or in other Meetings related to SDG6 (Goal on Water, Sanitation and Hygiene)?
3. 3.Are there any platforms or opportunities created for influencing the government on SDG accountability? If your answer is "No" skip Q4 and Q5.
4. 4. List three activities undertaken by these platforms/ networks towards achieving the targets set by the Government.
5. The existing networks and platforms are effective towards achieving the national SDG targets. Select from agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree,
6. National databases and management information systems are functional in providing enough data to monitor SDG progress. Select from agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree,
7. NGOs/ Civil society organizations are currently given adequate opportunities in supporting government through social awareness, advocacy & other activities. Select from agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree,
8. What are the regional & national level priority actions with regard to SDG6 (Sustainable Development Goal relating to water sanitation and hygiene access to all by 2030) implementation?

Appendix 4: Survey questions and discussion points

The National Accountability Mechanisms Review was conducted in 2018 in each of the eight South Asian countries to assess the status of the existing accountability mechanisms to track the SDG 6 progress and role of CSOs in supporting the Governments. In continuation to this review, the current study has been proposed with an overall purpose of updating the SDG mapping study and collect the latest information and data on the baseline information collected as part of the previous assessment on where each country stands in setting targets and aligning SDG 6 targets with national plans and policies, data collection and implementation. This assessment should also be able to provide recommendations and suggestions to help determine the course of actions required at various levels to achieve the SDGs

1. State the latest national policy/ Country policy on water and sanitation and assess if it is aligned with SDG goal six i.e. water and sanitation for all and if there are specific policies for SDG 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3.
2. Update the status of the annual milestones and targets and indicators for SDG 6 defined at country level.?
3. What are the current achievements against the targets fixed in terms of coverage, quality and reliability of water and sanitation for all, update the figures from the previous study?
4. Update the list of Identified sector players at national and state levels who are included or jointly working towards these goals.
5. Assess the formation and functionality of the steering / monitoring committee appointed to oversee the status from time to time. If there is any multi stakeholder's platform that exists to focus on SDG 6 and or WASH progress in the country provide details of its composition, role and effectiveness of its functioning.
6. Update if there are any revised national and state linkages and mechanisms to achieve the SDG goals aligning the targets.
7. Update the data/ records of evidence on the SDG indicators and what parameters are measured at which level (i.e. village to national)
8. Update the information on any other assessments or studies being taken up on SDG measurement in addition to the already listed ones as part of the previous assessment.
9. Assess the gaps if any between the SDGs and the targets fixed at National/ state levels
10. Assess the status and functionality of the national databases/ MIS systems if they can provide enough data to monitor SDG progress

11. Seek ideas and input from various stakeholders consulted for this assessment and Suggest a framework for robust and inclusive mutual accountability mechanism and for constituting an actively functioning multi stakeholder's platform at the country level.
12. Make Suggestions or recommendations to help determine priorities and actions required at regional and national level with regard to SDG6 implementation.
13. Role of NGOs/CSOs in contributing towards achievement of national goals
14. Are the NGOs being involved in steering committees or in other Meetings related to SDG 6
15. Role of NGOs in supporting Governments through software activities
16. Are there any influencing platforms or opportunities created for influencing the Governments?
17. Are there any new NGO networks or platforms institutionalized after the study has been conducted
18. Update on the functionality of the existing national and international networks at country level towards achievement of SDGs
19. Update on the functions and efforts of these platforms towards achieving the targets set by national Governments
20. Do the networks maintain any data to feed into the records, if so, please do update the data?