

# **NATIONAL TO LOCAL GOVERNANCE IN THE MALDIVES – THE SIDS CONTEXT**

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# THE REPUBLIC OF MALDIVES

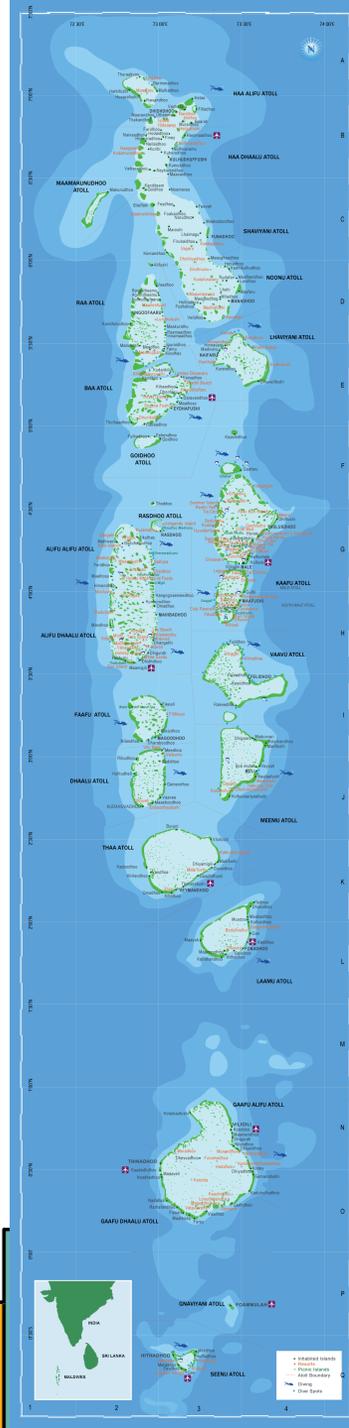
**Geography:** Archipelago of over 1000 islands, 200 inhabited, 20 administrative atolls. Islands no higher than 1 meter above sea-level.

**Population:** Approximately 520,000 as per 2022 National Census. Of which 250,000 + resides in Male'.

**Economy:** Main economic activities are tourism and fisheries.

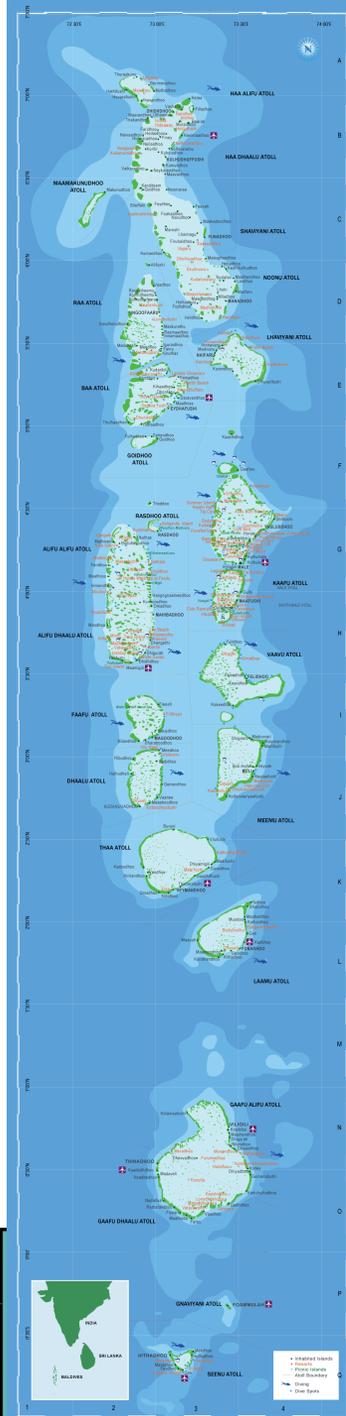
**Political Changes:** Multi-party democracy introduced in 2008, with decentralization enshrined in the constitution.

**Political Structure:** Republic with a Presidential system.



# THE REPUBLIC OF MALDIVES

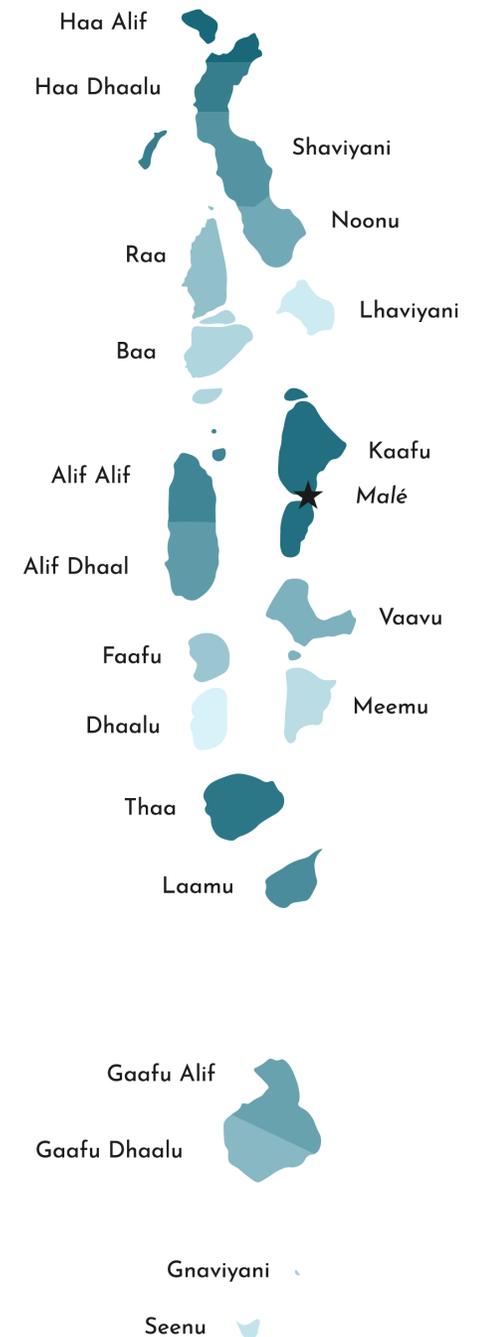
- **National Level**
  - **Executive Branch:** President as Head of State and Government. Cabinet appointed by the President.
  - **Legislative Branch:** Unicameral Parliament (People's Majlis) with elected representatives.
  - **Judicial Branch:** Independent judiciary with a Supreme Court at its apex.



# GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

- **Local level**

- Atoll Councils and City /Island Councils.
- Responsibilities: Local councils manage community affairs, public service delivery, development planning, community consultation.



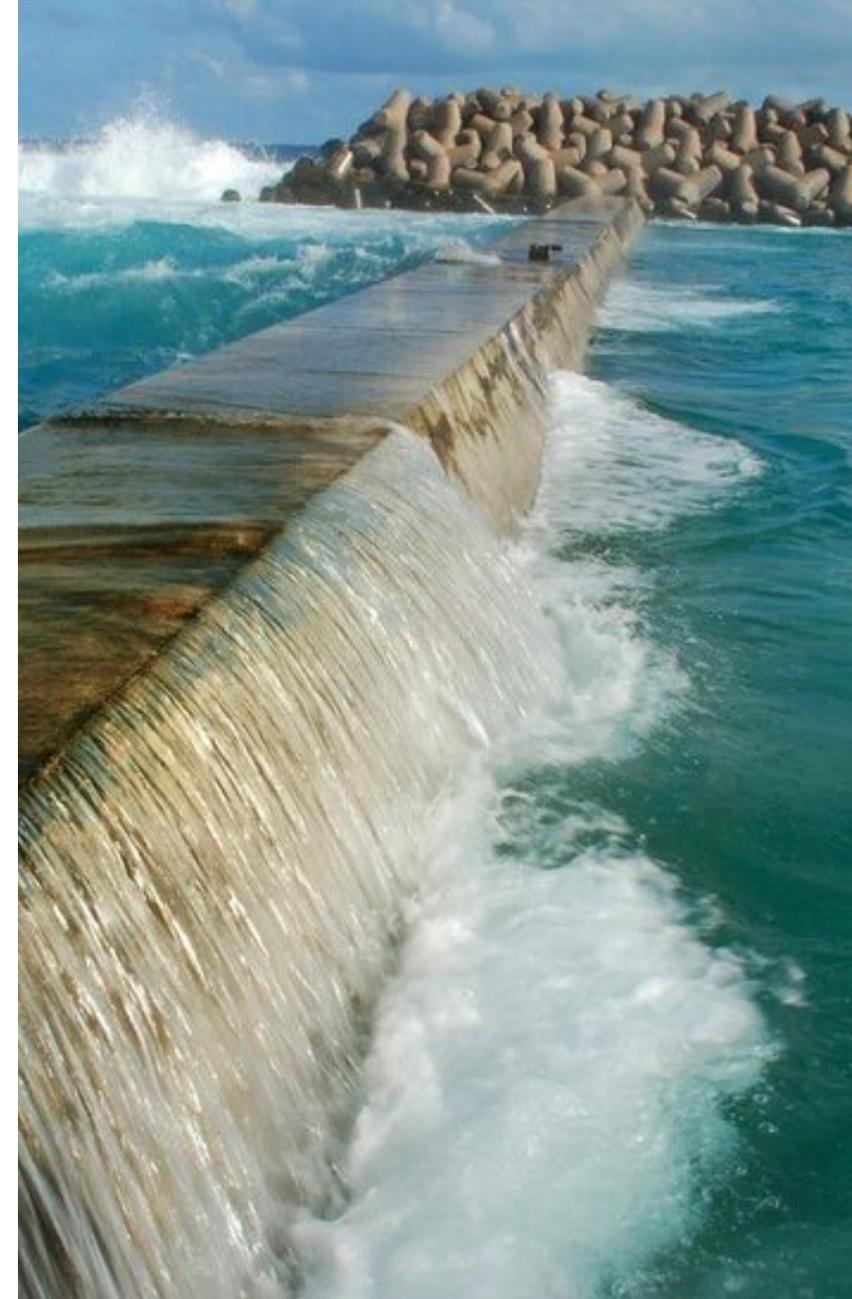
# DECENTRALIZATION IN THE MALDIVES

- Decentralization Act
  - Decentralization Act (7/2010) for local governance
  - Constitution of 2008 supporting decentralization.
  - Establishment of Local Government Authority (LGA).
  - Formalizes roles and responsibilities of Local Governments (Atoll and City/Island Councils).
  - Defines objectives: democratic decision-making, social, economic, cultural development, empowerment of people, and closer services to the population.



# THE REPUBLIC OF MALDIVES – A SIDS

- Maldives shares common traits with other SIDS:
  - Geographical remoteness and isolation from international markets
  - Environmental vulnerability of fragile land and marine ecosystems
  - Key challenges: Economic and social vulnerability to external shocks, growing dependence on high-end tourism
  - Impact of rapid economic growth: Significant impact from urbanization, and migration to Male' area.



# NATIONAL TO LOCAL GOVERNANCE IN THE MALDIVES: OVERVIEW OF THE CURRENT STATUS QUO



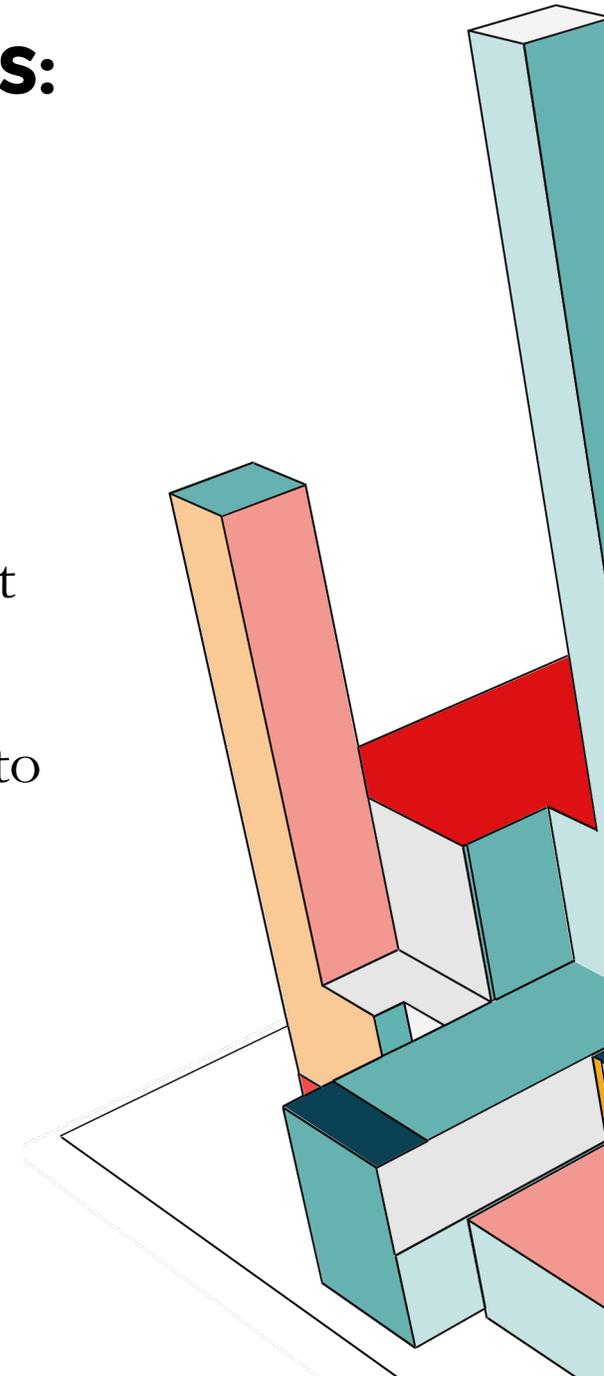
- Local governments are now tasked with driving community development initiatives through Community Development Plans (CDPs).
- CDPs are created in consultation with community members to ensure they reflect local priorities and preferences.
- Significant challenges exist:
  - Resource limitations, particularly in financing, often restrict the effectiveness of CDPs.
  - Limited expertise in local council administration further hinders successful implementation.



# NATIONAL TO LOCAL GOVERNANCE IN THE MALDIVES:

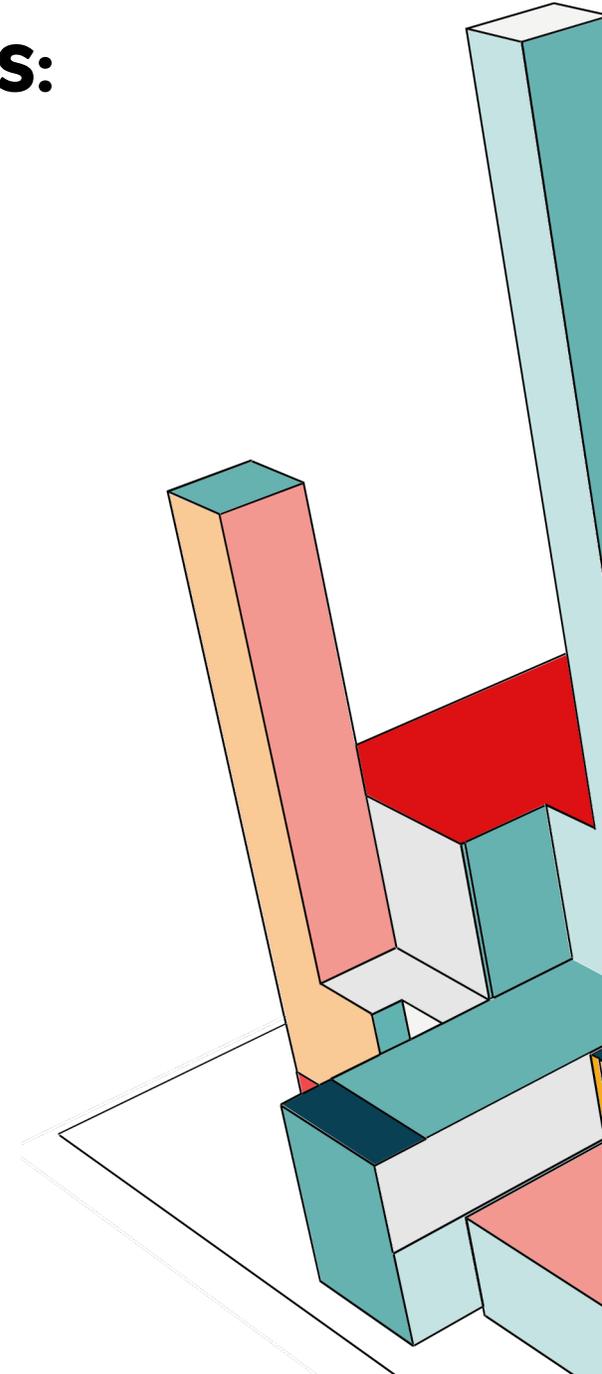
## OVERALL CHALLENGES

- Low community participation in local development processes.
- Weak policy and legal frameworks governing the Decentralization Act (7/2010), limiting vertical coherence in its implementation
- Central level plans, such as the 'Spatial Plan' and 'Regional Plan,' are not published or accessible to the public
- Lack of an inter-governmental mechanism or independent third party to resolve disputes between central and local level planning
- Restrictions in hiring competent staff due to Civil Service bureaucracy, inadequate remuneration packages and promotion guidelines.
- Limited accountability of Local Councils
- Exacerbated by SIDS-related challenges



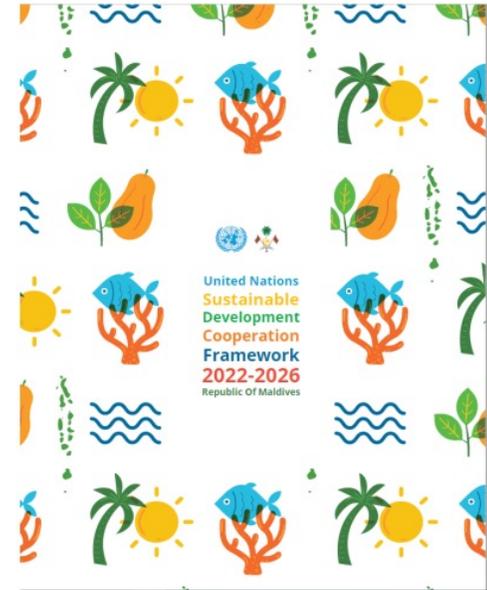
# NATIONAL TO LOCAL GOVERNANCE IN THE MALDIVES: CURRENT CHALLENGES

- Lack of Capacity in the Council Secretariat
- Councillors' Aspirations for Administrative Roles
- Delineation of Powers between Government and Local Government
- Government's Involvement in Local Governance through SOEs
- Party Politics and Its Impact on City Council
- Challenges in Implementing the Local Government Act



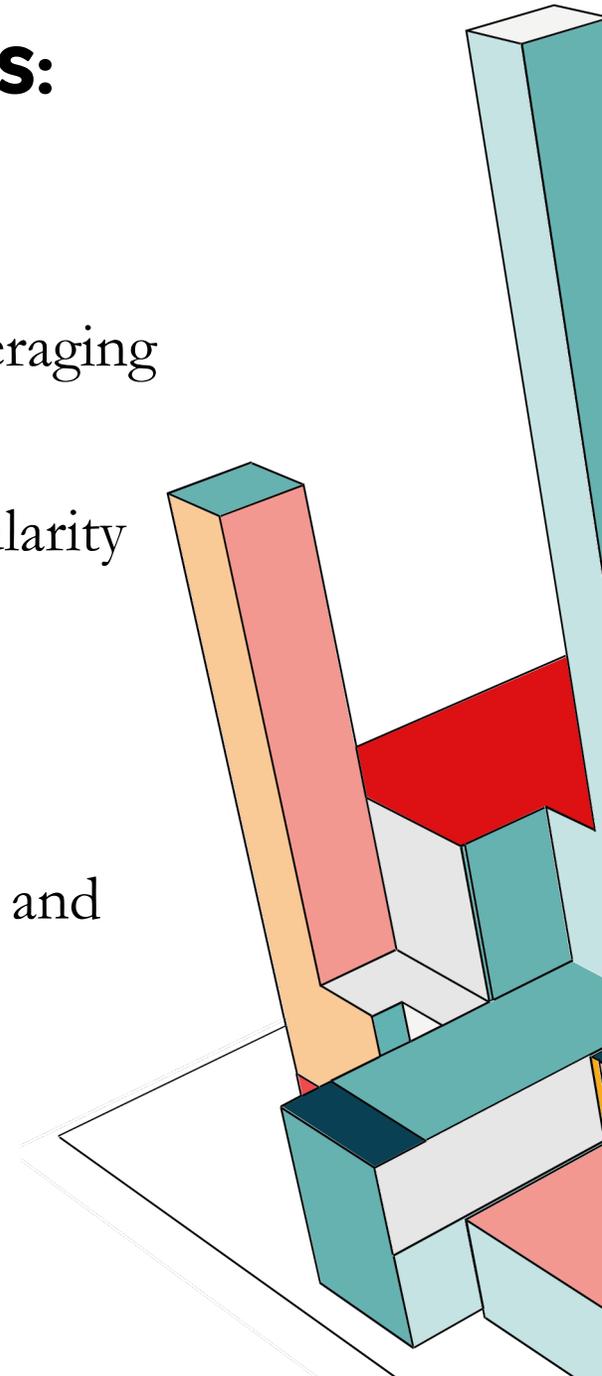
# NATIONAL TO LOCAL GOVERNANCE IN THE MALDIVES: THE SDGs IN THE MALDIVES

- Maldives SDG coordination: Structures established for SDG coordination; Integrated 88% of SDGs and targets
- Monitoring and coordination: Conducted outside core government mandates
- Localization and customization: Certain SDGs and targets need to be localized and customized to the Maldivian context.
- Development vision: A long-term development vision aligned with SDGs is needed.
- Local Councils: Need empowerment through awareness, training, data handling, and advocacy for contributing to SDG data collection and reviews



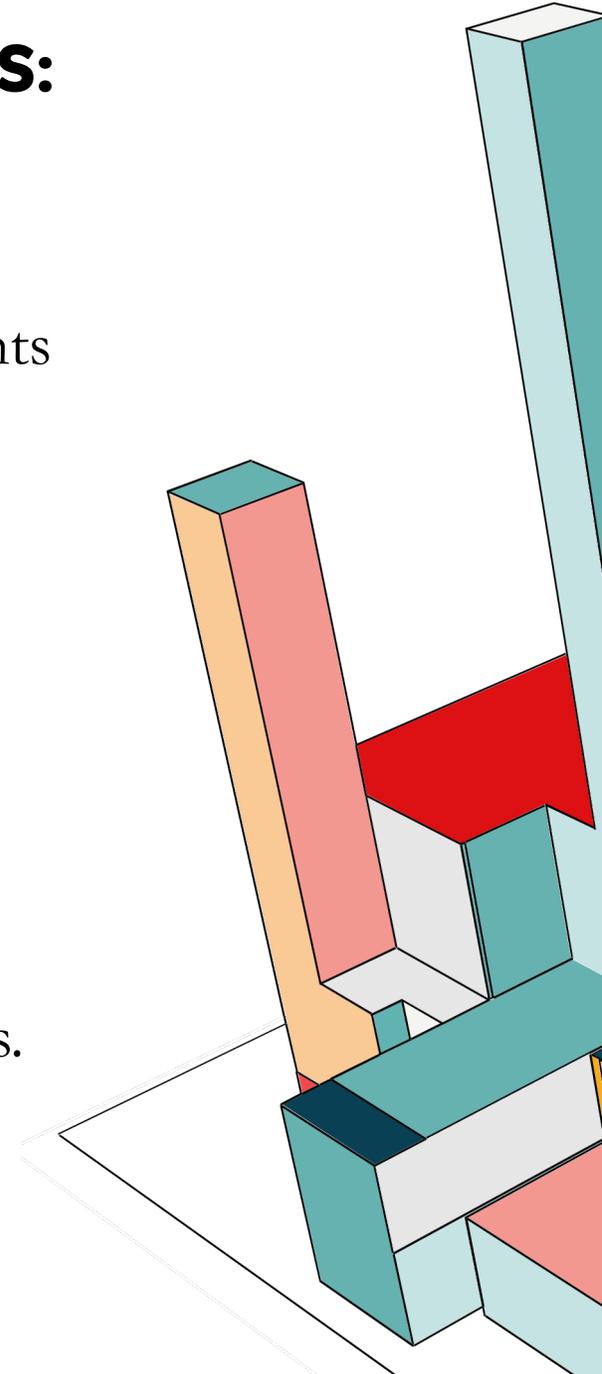
# NATIONAL TO LOCAL GOVERNANCE IN THE MALDIVES: ROADMAP FOR SDG IMPLEMENTATION

- Adopt an inclusive approach to develop a sustainable blue economy leveraging ocean and marine resources for long-term growth.
- Shift the tourism sector to inclusive, sustainable models promoting circularity and sustainable practices.
- Improve infrastructure and support for SMEs, focusing on youth- and women-led enterprises.
- Enhance employability of young Maldivians through skills development and smooth education-to-work transitions.
- Utilize digital technologies for sustainable development.



# NATIONAL TO LOCAL GOVERNANCE IN THE MALDIVES: ROADMAP FOR SDG IMPLEMENTATION

- Empower women in the economy and public life, ensuring human rights and gender equality.
- Reform social protection to address deprivations and inequality.
- Adopt a circular economy for waste management policy.
- Enhance institutional capacity for environmental management and enforcement.
- Strengthen decentralization and build local councils' capacity.
- Improve community-level participation and accountability mechanisms.



# CASE STUDIES AND LESSONS LEARNED

- **Sustainable Transport:**
  - In Malé, the Maldives Transport and Contracting Company (MTCC), a State-Owned Enterprise (SoE), launched bus services using electric buses.
  - This initiative demonstrates the potential for sustainable transport solutions to reduce carbon emissions and improve urban mobility.

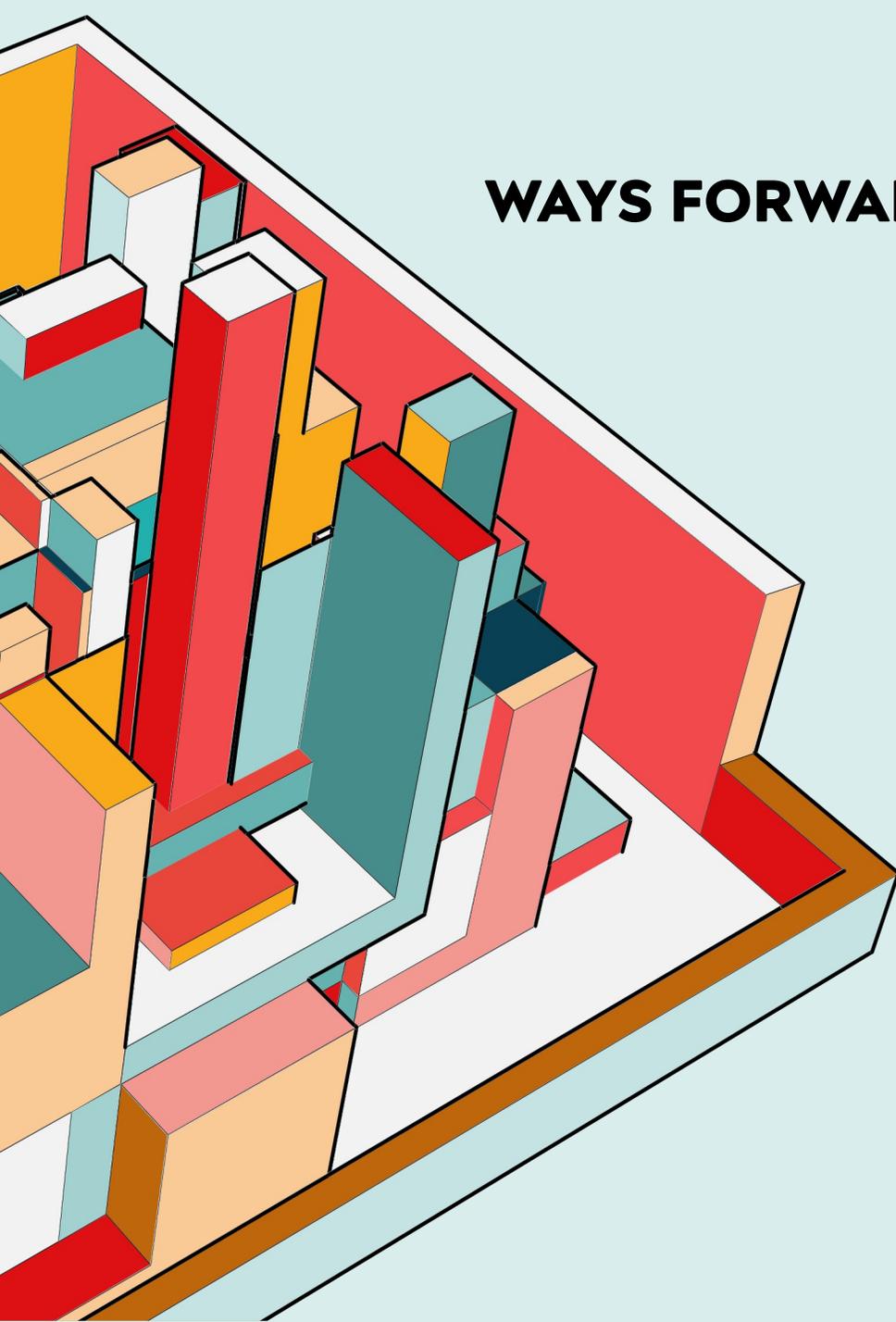


# CASE STUDIES AND LESSONS LEARNED

- **Climate Action:**
  - Implementation of solar power energy projects to harness renewable energy sources. 5MW solar power system on the Hulhule'-Hulhumale' link road. This project was financed under the Accelerating Sustainable Private Investment in Renewable Energy (ASPIRE) initiative.
  - The shift to solar power underscores the significance of climate action and renewable energy in reducing the Maldives' dependency on fossil fuels.







## WAYS FORWARD:

- Collaborate among stakeholders to address urgent challenges faced by SIDS.
- Build capacity at all levels to ensure contextual sensitivity and adoption of best practices.
- Foster genuine, long-lasting partnerships at the core of multi-stakeholder approaches.
- Enhance access to digital technologies and skills to support decentralization and citizen participation.

**THANK YOU**

