



National Maritime Transport Policy of Sri Lanka

MINISTRY OF PORTS, AND CIVIL AVIATION

1. Policy Name

National Maritime Transport Policy of Sri Lanka

2. Effective Date

This Policy becomes effective upon approval by the Cabinet of Ministers and shall remain valid until replaced or superseded. The Policy shall undergo:

- Mandatory evaluate and review annually and every five (05) years
- Interim reviews when any amendments to International Conventions which Sri Lanka is a party to are adopted.
- Urgent updates triggered by national needs (e.g., maritime security incidents, port system reforms, regulatory restructuring)

3. Introduction

" Sri Lanka stands at a strategic crossroads of the Indian Ocean, connecting the major global shipping lanes between East Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Europe. With more than 60,000 vessels annually traversing routes south of Sri Lanka, the nation remains uniquely positioned to leverage maritime trade, logistics, and marine resources for economic development, national security, and global connectivity.

Despite this strategic advantage, the maritime domain has historically been governed through dispersed policies, fragmented institutional mandates, and sector-specific strategies. To address this gap, the National Maritime Transport Policy consolidates existing frameworks and integrates:

- Lessons learned from previous national maritime strategies
- The full scope of the National Maritime Transport Policy (NMP) drafts
- Institutional mandates emerging under the new Maritime Authority of Sri Lanka (MASL)
- International maritime commitments (IMO, ILO, UN, UNCTAD, UNEP, IALA, IHO etc.)
- The need for coordinated maritime development over the next decade

This policy therefore functions as Sri Lanka's single, authoritative, and future-oriented national maritime framework."

I. Background

The maritime sector plays a pivotal role in Sri Lanka's economy, serving as a vital gateway for international trade and commerce. In recent years, Sri Lanka has recognized the importance of optimizing its maritime logistics to capitalize on its strategic geographical location and bolster economic growth. While there may not be a singular "National Maritime Transport Policy," Sri Lanka has implemented a range of initiatives and

strategies to enhance port infrastructure, streamline trade processes, and ensure the efficiency and sustainability of maritime operations. This introduction sets the stage for an exploration of Sri Lanka's endeavors in maritime logistics and the various policies and measures it has undertaken to strengthen its position as a regional maritime hub.

II. Need

Sri Lanka's strategic location in the Indian Ocean underscores the significance of its maritime sector in facilitating international trade and driving economic growth. To harness this potential fully, Sri Lanka is introducing a National Maritime Transport Policy. This policy aims to provide a comprehensive framework for optimizing maritime infrastructure, services, and regulations.

Key Objectives:

- I. **Infrastructure Development:** Enhancing port facilities to accommodate growing trade volumes and larger vessels.
- II. **Regulatory Framework:** The maritime sector's regulatory space must be unified and rationalized. The replacement of Merchant Shipping Secretariat (MSS) by Maritime Authority of Sri Lanka (MASL) resolves a long-standing governance fragmentation, establishing clear regulations for safety, security, and environmental protection.
- III. **Multimodal Connectivity:** Integrating maritime transport with other modes to improve overall logistics efficiency.
- IV. **Trade Facilitation:** Simplifying customs procedures and documentation to reduce costs and transit times.
- V. **Marine Human Resources:** To establish a national policy framework that will drive the planning, development, standardization and quality assurance of marine human resources.
- VI. **Capacity Building:** Investing in workforce development and skills training to meet industry demands.
- VII. **Technology Adoption:** Embracing digitalization and automation for optimized operations and risk mitigation.
- VIII. **Environmental Sustainability:** Implementing eco-friendly practices to minimize the sector's environmental footprint.
- IX. **Maritime Services:** Promoting ancillary services to diversify the maritime economy and attract investment.
- X. **Compliance:** Developing procedures and legal framework to comply with conventions of International Maritime Organization (IMO) and other international conventions related to Maritime industry which Sri Lanka is a party to.
- XI. **Ship Reporting:** Develop a Vessel Management System (VMS) works in concert with the principles and measures described in the IMO's "Ships' Routing" guide to enhance navigation safety and efficiency, and protect the marine environment.

Through these initiatives, Sri Lanka aims to establish itself as a regional maritime hub, fostering innovation and driving sustainable economic development.

III. Purpose & Context

Sri Lanka's geographical positioning as a crucial maritime crossroads necessitates a strategic approach to harnessing its maritime potential effectively. Against this backdrop, the National Maritime Transport Policy is being introduced with a dual purpose: to optimize the nation's maritime resources and to bolster its position as a key player in regional and global trade.

Purpose:

- I. **Optimization of Maritime Resources:** The policy aims to streamline and modernize Sri Lanka's maritime infrastructure, marine human resources, services, and regulatory frameworks. By doing so, it seeks to enhance efficiency, reliability, and sustainability across the maritime logistics sector.
- II. **Enhancement of Trade Competitiveness:** By fostering a conducive environment for maritime trade, the policy seeks to boost Sri Lanka's competitiveness in global markets. This includes improving connectivity, reducing trade barriers, and facilitating smoother logistics operations.

Context:

- I. **Strategic Geopolitical Position:** Situated at the nexus of major international shipping routes, Sri Lanka's maritime significance extends beyond its borders. The policy is crafted to capitalize on this strategic advantage and position the country as a vital player in regional and global maritime trade.
- II. **Economic Imperatives:** With maritime trade serving as a cornerstone of Sri Lanka's economy, there is a pressing need to modernize and optimize the maritime logistics infrastructure. The policy is designed to address these imperatives and unlock the full economic potential of the maritime sector.
- III. **Global Trends and Best Practices:** In an increasingly interconnected and technologically-driven world, the policy draws inspiration from global best practices and emerging trends in maritime logistics. It seeks to align Sri Lanka's strategies with international standards to ensure relevance and competitiveness on the global stage.

By elucidating the purpose and context of the National Maritime Transport Policy, Sri Lanka aims to embark on a transformative journey towards a more efficient, sustainable, and globally-integrated maritime ecosystem.

IV. Rationale

The introduction of Sri Lanka's National Maritime Transport Policy is underpinned by several compelling rationales, reflecting both internal imperatives and external opportunities:

- I. **Economic Growth:** Sri Lanka's economy is intricately tied to maritime trade, with ports serving as vital gateways for imports and exports. By optimizing maritime logistics, the policy aims to catalyze economic growth by facilitating smoother trade flows, attracting investment, and creating employment opportunities.
- II. **Marine Human Resources:** The Marine Human Resources are recognized as the most valuable and strategic asset for the Sri Lankan advancement of Marine Industry. Sri Lankan Seafarers have been playing a pivotal role in international seaborne trade, the global economy and the society over the years in general. Marine human resources involve a multifaceted approach that addresses various aspects such as education, training, employment, and sustainable development.
- III. **Competitive Advantage:** In an increasingly competitive global market, Sri Lanka seeks to leverage its strategic location along key shipping routes. The policy aims to enhance the country's competitive advantage by improving port infrastructure, reducing logistics costs, and offering efficient services to shipping lines and traders.
- IV. **Infrastructure Modernization:** Sri Lanka's maritime infrastructure requires modernization to accommodate larger vessels, handle increasing cargo volumes, and meet evolving industry standards. The policy prioritizes investments in port facilities, terminals, and supporting infrastructure to enhance operational efficiency and capacity.
- V. **Trade Facilitation:** Complex customs procedures, bureaucratic red tape, and inefficient logistics processes often hinder trade competitiveness. The policy aims to streamline trade procedures, reduce administrative burdens, and enhance supply chain efficiency to facilitate smoother cargo movement and reduce transaction costs.
- VI. **Regional Integration:** Sri Lanka's strategic location positions it as a gateway to South Asia and a potential hub for regional trade and connectivity. The policy seeks to enhance regional integration by improving maritime connectivity, promoting trade linkages, and collaborating with neighboring countries on port development initiatives.
- VII. **Sustainability and Resilience:** Climate change, environmental degradation, and natural disasters pose significant risks to maritime operations and infrastructure. The policy emphasizes sustainability and resilience measures to mitigate these risks, including eco-friendly practices, disaster preparedness, and infrastructure resilience enhancements.
- VIII. **Technology Adoption:** Rapid advancements in digitalization, automation, and data analytics offer transformative opportunities for the maritime industry. The policy encourages technology adoption to optimize port operations, enhance supply chain visibility, and improve decision-making processes.
- IX. **Policy Coordination and Governance:** Fragmented regulatory frameworks and institutional inefficiencies often hinder policy implementation and coordination in

the maritime sector. The policy aims to enhance governance structures, promote inter-agency collaboration, and establish clear accountability mechanisms to ensure effective policy implementation.

By addressing these rationales, Sri Lanka's National Maritime Transport Policy seeks to unlock the full potential of the country's maritime sector, driving economic growth, enhancing trade competitiveness, and fostering sustainable development.

V. Vision

“To position Sri Lanka as a globally competitive, safe, secure, sustainable, and technologically advanced Indian Ocean Maritime Hub, delivering economic prosperity, environmental stewardship, and inclusive opportunities for all citizens.”

VI. Mission

“To strengthen maritime governance, modernize infrastructure, enhance human capital, discharge obligations under various international conventions and promote innovation through a unified, transparent, and internationally aligned regulatory framework driven by MASL and supported by collaborative national and global partnerships.”

4. Policy Principles

Sri Lanka's Maritime Transport Policy is guided by a set of core principles that underpin its strategic objectives and policy interventions. These principles reflect the country's commitment to fostering sustainable economic development, enhancing trade facilitation, ensuring safety and security, promoting environmental sustainability, fostering international collaboration, and providing a conducive regulatory framework for maritime activities. The following are the key policy principles:

- I. **Sustainable Development:** Sri Lanka is committed to promoting sustainable development in its maritime sector, balancing economic growth with environmental conservation and social responsibility. Policies prioritize investments and initiatives that support long-term sustainability, minimize environmental impact, and enhance the resilience of maritime ecosystems.
- II. **Trade Facilitation:** The country emphasizes the importance of trade facilitation in its Maritime Transport Policy, aiming to streamline trade processes, reduce bureaucratic barriers, and enhance the efficiency of maritime logistics. Policies focus on optimizing port operations, improving customs procedures, and enhancing connectivity to facilitate smoother movement of goods and services.
- III. **Safety and Security:** Sri Lanka prioritizes safety and security in its Maritime Transport Policy, recognizing the importance of safeguarding maritime activities against threats such as piracy, terrorism, and maritime accidents. Policies include measures to enhance safety, maritime security capabilities, strengthen regulatory

frameworks, and promote cooperation with international partners to ensure the safety and security of maritime operations.

- IV. **Environmental Sustainability:** Environmental sustainability is a key pillar of Sri Lanka's Maritime Transport Policy, with policies aimed at promoting eco-friendly shipping practices, reducing emissions, and mitigating pollution in ports and coastal areas. The country is committed to adopting green technologies, implementing pollution prevention measures, and conserving marine biodiversity to minimize the environmental impact of maritime activities.
- V. **International Collaboration:** Sri Lanka values international collaboration and cooperation in its Maritime Transport Policy, recognizing the importance of partnerships with neighboring countries, regional organizations, and international stakeholders. Policies promote dialogue, information sharing, and joint initiatives to address common maritime challenges, enhance maritime connectivity, and promote mutual prosperity.
- VI. **Regulatory Framework:** Sri Lanka maintains a transparent, predictable, and conducive regulatory framework for maritime activities, guided by principles of good governance, accountability, and legal certainty. Policies aim to establish clear regulations, standards, and compliance requirements to ensure the orderly conduct of maritime operations and provide a level playing field for stakeholders.
- VII. **Inclusive Growth:** Sri Lanka's Maritime Transport Policy is committed to promoting inclusive growth and socio-economic development, ensuring that the benefits of maritime activities are equitably distributed across society. Policies aim to prioritize investments in human capital, skills development, and infrastructure to create employment opportunities, support livelihoods, and foster inclusive prosperity.

These policy principles guide Sri Lanka's strategic approach to maritime development, shaping its priorities, actions, and engagements in the maritime domain. By upholding these principles, Sri Lanka aims to harness the full potential of its maritime sector for sustainable development and prosperity.

5. Policy Statements

- I. **Economic Development:** Sri Lanka is committed to leveraging its maritime assets to drive economic development and prosperity. Our policies will focus on attracting investment, promoting trade, and enhancing the competitiveness of our maritime sector to maximize its contribution to GDP growth and employment generation.
- II. **Trade Facilitation:** We recognize the importance of efficient trade facilitation in promoting economic growth and competitiveness. Our policies will prioritize Streamlining customs procedures, reducing clearance times, and improving connectivity to facilitate smoother movement of goods and services through our ports.

- III. **Infrastructure Development:** Sri Lanka is committed to modernizing and expanding its port infrastructure to accommodate growing trade volumes and enhance connectivity with regional and global markets. Our policies will focus on investing in port facilities, upgrading transportation networks, and enhancing hinterland connectivity to support sustained economic growth.
- IV. **Safety and Security:** Ensuring the safety and security of maritime activities is a top priority for Sri Lanka. Our policies will aim to strengthen maritime security capabilities, enhance surveillance and monitoring systems, and combat piracy, terrorism, and maritime crimes to safeguard our maritime interests and protect national security.
- V. **Environmental Sustainability:** Sri Lanka is dedicated to promoting environmental sustainability in its maritime operations. Our policies will focus on reducing emissions from shipping, minimizing pollution in ports and coastal areas, conserving marine biodiversity, and promoting the adoption of green technologies and practices to mitigate the environmental impact of maritime activities.
- VI. **International Collaboration:** We recognize the importance of international collaboration in addressing common maritime challenges and promoting mutual prosperity. Our policies will prioritize strengthening partnerships with neighboring countries, regional organizations, and international stakeholders to enhance maritime connectivity and cooperation.
- VII. **Regulatory Framework and Governance:** Sri Lanka is committed to establishing a transparent, predictable, and conducive regulatory framework for maritime activities. Empowering MASL as the national maritime administration replacing MSS. Our policies will focus on ensuring compliance with international maritime laws and regulations, enhancing governance and institutional capacity, and promoting good governance practices to create a favorable business environment for maritime stakeholders.

These policy statements outline Sri Lanka's strategic priorities and commitments in the maritime domain, guiding our efforts to harness the full potential of our maritime sector for sustainable development and prosperity.

6. Policy Goals

Sri Lanka's Maritime Transport Policy is designed to achieve a set of overarching goals that align with the country's strategic priorities and aspirations for its maritime sector. These goals reflect Sri Lanka's commitment to fostering economic development, enhancing trade connectivity, ensuring safety and security as a Flag, Coastal and Port States, promoting environmental sustainability, fostering international collaboration, and providing a conducive regulatory framework for maritime activities. The following are the key policy goals:

- I. **Economic Growth and Competitiveness:** Sri Lanka aims to stimulate economic growth and enhance its competitiveness as a maritime nation. Policy goals include increasing the contribution of the maritime sector to GDP, attracting investment in port infrastructure and related industries, and positioning Sri Lanka as a preferred destination for

maritime trade and investment.

- II. **Trade Facilitation and Connectivity:** Sri Lanka seeks to enhance trade facilitation and connectivity through its Maritime Transport Policy. Goals include optimizing port operations, reducing clearance times for cargo, improving transportation networks, and enhancing connectivity with regional and global markets to facilitate smoother movement of goods and services.
- III. **Marine Human Resources:** Sri Lanka has the potential generate further economic benefit from our Seafaring talent. The industry has ambitious plans to grow the number of Seafarers actively engaged by 3-fold over the next ten years whilst deriving a revenue increase of 4-fold over the same period. However, one of the key challenges faced by the industry is that Sri Lanka is presently restricted with only 6,000 dedicated slots. This is a major impediment for the aggressive growth objectives of the industry. Similarly, the uptake of entry level post qualifying Seafarers has been rather slow creating significant challenges to the talent entering the industry. Therefore, it is important an effective branding strategy and promote Sri Lanka at a global level with the assistance of stakeholders.

Accordingly, the industry aims to focus on the following five (05) thrust pillars to develop the marine human resources.

- Standardization, Quality Assurance and Regulatory Reforms
 - Maritime Education and Training
 - Segment – wise Employment Development
 - Global Promotions
 - Seafarer wellbeing and welfare
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- **Standardization, Quality Assurance & Regulatory Reforms**

Sri Lanka will enhance Maritime Education and Training (MET) regulatory oversight through periodic audits and continuous monitoring covering faculty quality, infrastructure, teaching staff, learning outcomes, and gender-inclusive provisions.

Curricula and assessments will be updated annually to align with IMO model courses, regularity updates, technical advancement and global requirements.

A mandatory English proficiency test will apply to all CDC applicants to ensure effective onboard communication.

A national digital identity verification system connecting MASL, Immigration, Registrar of Persons, Ports, and SRPS will streamline certificate validation, reduce fraud, and strengthen transparency.

Clear disciplinary procedures will address desertion, visa violations, document fraud, and unethical behavior.

Reforms to ETO and COC pathways will reduce required sea time through simulation and allow engine cadets to undertake mandatory shipyard training or other approved workshop training.

Tanker training eligibility will be modernized by allowing enrolment without prior sea time (Only for basic tanker training)

MET approvals will incorporate gender-sensitive requirements, including anti-harassment policies, safe reporting mechanisms, continuous monitoring, periodic auditing and gender-disaggregated annual reporting.

Monitoring that resource persons at METs and assessors at MASL are updated regularly with industry and regularity development

- **Maritime Education, Training & Skills Development**

A unified national STCW-aligned curriculum will integrate digital tools, hybrid teaching, simulator-based assessments, mental-health awareness, and gender-sensitivity training. NVQ-qualified tradesmen will have structured conversion pathways into marine careers, and electricians will be supported to transition into ETO certification.

Revised COC routes for domestic vessels including NCV Chief Engineer up to 2000 kW, Master up to 3000 GRT, and Tug Master/Mate will strengthen local maritime capacity. Government training centers will be upgraded to deliver all mandatory short courses to international standards with improved simulation and safety facilities.

Female participation will be expanded through inclusion targets, scholarships, hostel support, and gender-safe accommodation and sanitation across all MET institutions.

Establishing a pathway for COC holders (FG) to obtain degree level qualifications

Established a pathway for Sri Lanka Navy personal to transform into the Merchant Navy by evaluating and recognizing naval training and sea service.

- **Segment-Wise Employment Development**

A National Seafarer Talent Portal will provide verified profiles, digital certificates, employer access, and foreign-exchange tracking, along with a dedicated Women in Maritime Employment Registry.

Sri Lanka will focus on key employment markets Europe and Asia through targeted agreements and industry partnerships. Specialized training pipelines will be developed for LNG, offshore, cruise, and EU-flag vessels to meet global demand.

Expanded CDC categories will formally include catering and hospitality roles to boost cruise and offshore employability.

Female employment will be encouraged through employer incentives, broader participation in hospitality, engineering, and medical support roles, and structured re-entry programs for women returning after caregiving or maternity breaks.

- **Global Promotions & International Branding**

Sri Lanka will build a strong global identity highlighting its disciplined, digitally verified, and gender-inclusive maritime workforce.

Branding themes will focus on foreign-exchange contributions, global competitiveness, and inclusivity.

Diplomatic networks will be strengthened through Maritime Liaison Officers, Seafarer Promotion Toolkits for embassies, and annual global Maritime Talent Forums.

Government-to-government agreements will secure cadet berths, officer placements, and rating quotas.

Develop a division with the Foreign Employment Bureau in order to find employment overseas for Sri Lankan Seafarers

Female maritime professionals will be featured in international campaigns, with partnerships through IMO's Women in Maritime Programme and WISTA to enhance visibility.

- **Seafarer Wellbeing, Welfare & Social Protection**

Comprehensive wellbeing programs will include a 24/7 counselling hotline, emotional-health education in MET, and shipboard wellbeing protocols aligned with IMO/ITF guidance.

A national vaccination and medical program will ensure compliance with maritime medical standards and periodic health checks.

Financial-literacy training will help seafarers manage remittances, savings, and investments, supporting family financial stability.

Affordable hostel facilities for trainees will be developed through PPPs to ease accommodation challenges.

A standardized national cadet placement policy will streamline berths and incentivize shipowners.

Gender-specific welfare measures will include anti-harassment systems, safe onboard reporting, female-friendly cabins and sanitation, maternity protections under MLC 2006, and tailored mental-health and safety programs for female crew.

Full implementation of the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC) requirements for seafarers, including minimum age, medical certification, a signed employment agreement with specific details on wages, leave, and repatriation, rights to fair terms and decent living/working conditions including their welfare.

IV. **Promotion of Small & Medium Scale Enterprises:** Promoting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the maritime and logistics sector can significantly contribute to economic growth, job creation, and overall industry development.

V. **Infrastructure Development:** The country prioritizes infrastructure development in its Maritime Transport Policy to accommodate growing trade volumes, larger vessels, and evolving customer needs. Goals include modernizing port facilities, expanding port capacity, upgrading transportation networks, and enhancing hinterland connectivity to support sustained economic growth.

VI. **Safety and Security:** Sri Lanka places a high priority on ensuring the safety and security of maritime activities. Policy goals include strengthening maritime security capabilities, enhancing surveillance and monitoring systems, combating piracy, terrorism, and maritime crimes, and promoting compliance with international safety and security standards to safeguard maritime interests.

VII. **Environmental Sustainability:** Environmental sustainability is a key focus of Sri Lanka's Maritime Transport Policy. Goals include reducing emissions from shipping, minimizing pollution in ports and coastal areas, conserving marine biodiversity, and promoting the adoption of green technologies and practices to mitigate the environmental impact of maritime activities.

VIII. **International Collaboration and Diplomacy:** Sri Lanka aims to enhance international collaboration and diplomacy through its Maritime Transport Policy. Goals include strengthening partnerships with neighboring countries, regional organizations, and international stakeholders, promoting dialogue, information sharing, and joint initiatives to address common maritime challenges and promote mutual prosperity.

- IX. **Regulatory Framework and Governance:** The country seeks to establish a transparent, predictable, and conducive regulatory framework for maritime activities. Goals include ensuring compliance with international maritime laws and regulations, enhancing governance and institutional capacity, and promoting good governance practices to create a favorable business environment for maritime stakeholders.
- X. **Ship Reporting:** It has been observed that ship movement traffic along the South of Sri Lanka that the maximum of vessel traffic and traffic density is seen off Galle, Sri Lanka. It is because of the simple fact that entire traffic from the Persian Gulf, Indian Coast and Gulf of Aden via the eight-degree channel converges off Galle. Since ships are converging from multiple directions, and all of them are altering their course after reaching Galle, it is vital to make traffic lanes which separate not only the opposing traffic but also to guide the vessels to make the course alteration uniformly in an appropriate position. Most important aspect is that the traffic lanes should be arranged in such a manner to ease the flow to/from an adjacent TSS off Dondra Head. Installation of Vessel Management System (VMS) to enhance navigation safety and efficiency, and protect the marine environment as there a quite a lot of large oil tankers passing Galle area and any marine accident of a tanker will be a huge economic disaster for Sri Lanka

These policy goals guide Sri Lanka's strategic direction in the maritime domain, informing its policy priorities, actions, and engagements to harness the full potential of its maritime sector for sustainable development and prosperity. By working towards these goals, Sri Lanka aims to position itself as a dynamic and competitive maritime nation in the global arena.

7. Applicability & Scope

Sri Lanka's Maritime Transport Policy is designed to be comprehensive and applicable across various dimensions of the maritime sector. The policy's scope encompasses a wide range of stakeholders, activities, and areas of intervention to ensure its effectiveness in driving sustainable development and prosperity. The following outlines the applicability and scope of Sri Lanka's Maritime Transport Policy:

- I. **Geographical Coverage:** The policy applies to all maritime activities within Sri Lanka's territorial waters, including its ports, coastal areas, and maritime zones. It also considers Sri Lanka's strategic location along major international shipping routes, emphasizing the country's role as a maritime hub in the Indian Ocean region.
- II. **Stakeholder Engagement:** The policy seeks to engage a diverse range of stakeholders, including government agencies, private sector entities, civil society organizations, academic institutions, and international partners. Collaboration and consultation with stakeholders are integral to the policy's formulation, implementation, and evaluation processes.
- III. **Sectoral Coverage:** Sri Lanka's Maritime Transport Policy addresses various sectors within the maritime domain, including port development, shipping services, maritime trade, logistics, fisheries, tourism, marine conservation, and maritime security. It adopts a holistic approach to ensure coordinated and integrated

development across these sectors.

- IV. **Policy Instruments:** The policy utilizes a mix of regulatory, institutional, financial, and capacity-building instruments to achieve its objectives. These may include legislation, regulations, policies, guidelines, incentives, investments, partnerships, and capacity-building initiatives tailored to specific needs and priorities.
- V. **Temporal Dimension:** The policy considers both short-term and long-term goals, recognizing the need for immediate actions to address pressing challenges while laying the foundation for sustained development over time. It includes mechanisms for periodic review, monitoring, and adjustment to adapt to changing circumstances and emerging priorities.
- VI. **International Dimension:** While primarily focused on domestic priorities, Sri Lanka's Maritime Transport Policy also acknowledges the importance of international cooperation and alignment with global maritime norms, standards, and initiatives. It seeks to leverage international partnerships, agreements, and best practices to enhance maritime connectivity and collaboration.
- VII. **Sustainability and Resilience:** Sustainability and resilience are overarching themes within the policy's applicability and scope. It emphasizes sustainable development principles, environmental conservation, climate resilience, and inclusive growth to ensure that maritime activities contribute positively to societal well-being and future generations' prosperity.

In summary, Sri Lanka's Maritime Transport Policy is applicable and comprehensive in its scope, addressing a wide range of stakeholders, sectors, and challenges within the maritime domain. By adopting a holistic and inclusive approach, the policy aims to promote sustainable development, enhance connectivity, ensure safety and security, and foster international collaboration to maximize the benefits of Sri Lanka's maritime sector for all stakeholders.

8. Policy Implementation

Sri Lanka's Maritime Transport Policy implementation involves a systematic and coordinated approach to translating policy objectives into tangible actions and outcomes. The implementation process encompasses various stages, mechanisms, and stakeholders to ensure effective execution and monitoring of policy initiatives. The following outlines key aspects of policy implementation in the Sri Lankan maritime context:

- I. **Strategic Planning:** Implementation begins with the development of detailed action plans and strategies aligned with the overarching goals and priorities outlined in the Maritime Transport Policy. These plans outline specific objectives, targets, timelines, resource allocations, and responsibilities for various stakeholders involved in implementation.
- II. **Institutional Framework:** Establishing a robust institutional framework is essential for effective policy implementation. This involves defining roles, responsibilities, and coordination mechanisms among relevant government agencies, regulatory bodies, industry associations, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders to

facilitate seamless collaboration and decision-making.

- III. **Capacity Building:** Enhancing institutional and human capacity is critical for successful policy implementation. Capacity-building initiatives may include training programs, workshops, seminars, technical assistance and knowledge-sharing platforms to equip stakeholders with the necessary skills, knowledge, and resources to carry out their roles effectively.
- IV. **Legislative and Regulatory Reforms:** Policy implementation may require legislative and regulatory reforms to align legal frameworks with policy objectives, address gaps, streamline procedures, and ensure compliance with international standards and best practices. This may involve drafting new laws, amending existing regulations, or developing guidelines and standards as necessary.
- V. **Investment and Infrastructure Development:** Implementation of the Maritime Transport Policy involves mobilizing financial resources and investments to support infrastructure development projects, including port upgrades, transportation networks, maritime facilities, and related infrastructure. Public-private partnerships (PPPs) and foreign direct investment (FDI) may be leveraged to finance large-scale projects.
- VI. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Continuous monitoring and evaluation are essential to track progress, assess the effectiveness of policy interventions, identify bottlenecks or challenges, and make necessary adjustments to implementation strategies. Key performance indicators (KPIs) and benchmarks are established to measure progress towards policy goals and targets.
- VII. **Stakeholder Engagement and Communication:** Engaging stakeholders and fostering open communication channels are critical for garnering support, soliciting feedback, addressing concerns, and building consensus around policy implementation efforts. Regular consultations, stakeholder meetings, forums, and outreach activities are conducted to ensure inclusivity and transparency.
- VIII. **Risk Management and Contingency Planning:** Anticipating and mitigating risks is integral to successful policy implementation. Risk management strategies are developed to identify potential challenges, such as budget constraints, technical issues, political factors, or external shocks, and develop contingency plans to address them proactively.
- IX. **Adaptive Management:** Implementation plans are flexible and adaptive, allowing for iterative adjustments based on evolving circumstances, feedback, and lessons learned. Regular reviews and assessments are conducted to identify emerging trends, best practices, and areas for improvement, ensuring that policy implementation remains responsive and effective over time.

By adopting a systematic and holistic approach to policy implementation, Sri Lanka aims to achieve the objectives outlined in its Maritime Transport Policy, promote sustainable development, enhance competitiveness, and maximize the benefits of its maritime sector

for economic growth and societal well-being.

I. Strategies

Strategies for implementing Sri Lanka's Maritime Transport Policy encompass a range of approaches aimed at achieving its objectives effectively. These strategies are tailored to address specific

challenges, leverage opportunities, and capitalize on Sri Lanka's maritime strengths.

The following are key strategies for implementing the Maritime Transport Policy:

- i. **Infrastructure Development:** Prioritize investments in port infrastructure, transportation networks, and related facilities to enhance capacity, efficiency, and connectivity. Develop and upgrade ports to accommodate larger vessels, improve cargo handling capabilities, and facilitate seamless intermodal transportation.
- ii. **Ease of Doing Business Index:**
 - Streamlining customs procedures, port entry, and clearance processes to reduce paperwork and processing time.
 - Implementing electronic documentation and digital platforms for all regulatory approvals to minimize delays.
 - Reviewing and rationalizing port charges, tariffs, and fees to make them competitive with regional and global ports.
 - Providing clear and transparent information on all costs associated with maritime operations to businesses and investors.

The Government shall take any possible measures to encourage the growth of Sri Lankan Maritime industry including attractive fiscal measures when and where necessary.

- iii. **Safety and Security Enhancement:** Strengthen maritime security capabilities, surveillance systems, and regulatory frameworks to ensure the safety and security of maritime activities. Collaborate with international partners, neighboring countries, and relevant organizations to combat piracy, maritime terrorism, and maritime crimes effectively.
- iv. **Environmental Sustainability:** Promote sustainable shipping practices, reduce emissions from vessels, and minimize pollution in ports and coastal areas. Implement regulations, incentives, and awareness campaigns to encourage the adoption of green technologies, energy-efficient practices, and pollution prevention measures in the maritime sector.
- v. **Human Resource Development:** Invest in education, training, and skills development programs to build a skilled workforce capable of meeting the demands of the maritime industry. Collaborate with academic institutions, training centers, and industry associations to develop maritime-related curricula, certifications, and professional development opportunities.
- vi. **International Collaboration:** Strengthen partnerships with neighboring countries, regional organizations, and international stakeholders to enhance maritime connectivity, promote information sharing, and address common challenges. Participate in international forums, joint initiatives, and cooperative agreements to

foster mutual understanding and cooperation in the maritime domain.

- vii. **Regulatory Reform and Governance:** Review and update existing maritime laws, regulations, and administrative procedures to ensure alignment with international standards and best practices. Enhance transparency, accountability, and efficiency in regulatory processes to create a conducive business environment for maritime stakeholders.
- viii. **Promotion of Maritime Tourism:** Develop and promote Sri Lanka's maritime tourism potential by diversifying tourism offerings, improving infrastructure, and enhancing visitor experiences in coastal areas, ports, and maritime heritage sites. Collaborate with the tourism industry, local communities, and environmental organizations to ensure sustainable tourism practices.
- ix. **Research and Innovation:** Encourage research, innovation, and technology adoption in the maritime sector to drive productivity, competitiveness, and sustainability. Support research institutions, startups, and technology incubators to develop innovative solutions for maritime challenges, such as fuel efficiency, waste management, and maritime safety.

By implementing these strategies effectively, Sri Lanka aims to achieve the objectives outlined in its Maritime Transport Policy, strengthen its position as a maritime nation, and maximize the socio-economic benefits of its maritime sector for sustainable development and prosperity.

II. Responsibility & Authority

Responsibility and authority in the context of Maritime Transport Policy implementation refer to the roles and powers assigned to different stakeholders involved in executing policy initiatives, overseeing regulatory compliance, and achieving policy objectives. Here's an overview of responsibility and authority allocation among key stakeholders:

- i. **Government Agencies:** Government agencies are typically responsible for formulating, implementing, and enforcing maritime policies. They have the authority to develop regulations, allocate resources, and coordinate activities to achieve policy goals. Specific responsibilities may include:
 - a. Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Aviation: Responsible for overall policy formulation, port development, and maritime transportation.
 - b. Maritime Administration: Oversees maritime safety, Environment protection on board ships, vessel registration, and compliance with international maritime regulations.
 - c. Customs Department: Manages customs procedures, tariff enforcement, and trade facilitation at ports and maritime borders.
 - d. Environmental Agencies: Regulate and enforce environmental standards and pollution control measures in the maritime sector.
 - e. Defense and Security Agencies: Ensure maritime security, combat piracy, terrorism, and maritime crimes, and safeguard national interests.

- ii. **Regulatory Bodies:** Regulatory bodies are tasked with overseeing compliance with maritime regulations, standards, and licensing requirements. They have the authority to issue permits, conduct inspections, and enforce regulations to ensure safety, security, and environmental protection in the maritime domain. Examples include:
 - a. Port Authorities: Manage port operations, berth allocation, and port services, ensuring compliance with safety and environmental standards.
 - b. Coast Guard: Protect maritime interests, conduct maritime patrols, and enforce maritime laws and regulations in territorial waters in consultation with MASL.
 - c. Maritime Police: Maintain law and order, prevent maritime crimes, response to emergencies in coastal areas and maritime zones.
- iii. **Industry Associations:** Industry associations represent the interests of maritime stakeholders, including shipping companies, port operators, logistics providers, and maritime service providers. While they do not have regulatory authority, they advocate for policy reforms, provide input on policy formulation, and support implementation efforts through industry development initiatives and capacity-building programs.
- iv. **Civil Society Organizations (CSOs):** CSOs, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community groups, play a vital role in monitoring, advocating, and supporting sustainable development practices in the maritime sector. They raise awareness, mobilize public support, and hold stakeholders accountable for their actions through advocacy, research, and community engagement.
- v. **International Partners:** International partners, including bilateral and multilateral organizations, foreign governments, and international financial institutions, provide technical assistance, financial support, and expertise to support policy implementation. While they do not have direct regulatory authority, they collaborate with Sri Lanka to address common maritime challenges, promote best practices, and facilitate capacity-building initiatives.
- vi. **Local Authorities:** Local authorities, including provincial councils, municipal governments, and local communities, play a crucial role in implementing policies at the grassroots level. They support infrastructure development, environmental conservation, and community engagement initiatives in coastal areas, ports, and maritime heritage sites, ensuring alignment with national policies and objectives.

By delineating responsibilities and authorities among these stakeholders, Sri Lanka aims to ensure effective governance, regulatory compliance, and coordination in implementing its maritime policies, fostering sustainable development and prosperity in the maritime sector.

III. Monitoring & Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) are integral components of Sri Lanka's Maritime Transport Policy implementation framework, aimed at assessing progress, identifying challenges, and enhancing the effectiveness of policy interventions. The M&E process involves systematic data collection, analysis, and feedback mechanisms to track

performance against policy objectives and inform decision-making. The following outlines key elements of monitoring and evaluation in the context of Sri Lanka's Maritime Transport Policy:

- i. **Establishment of Performance Indicators:** Define key performance indicators (KPIs) and benchmarks to measure progress towards policy goals and targets. These indicators should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) to facilitate meaningful assessment of policy outcomes.
- ii. **Data Collection and Reporting:** Develop mechanisms for collecting relevant data and information on various aspects of the maritime sector, including port operations, shipping services, trade volumes, safety incidents, environmental indicators, and economic performance. Establish reporting requirements and formats to ensure consistency and reliability of data.
- iii. **Regular Monitoring Activities:** Conduct regular monitoring activities to track progress, identify trends, and detect emerging issues in the maritime sector. This may involve periodic reviews, performance assessments, site visits, stakeholder consultations, and data analysis to evaluate the implementation of policy initiatives and their impact on the ground.
- iv. **Evaluation of Policy Interventions:** Evaluate the effectiveness of specific policy interventions, programs, and projects in achieving their intended objectives. Use qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods, such as surveys, interviews, case studies, cost-benefit analysis, and impact assessments, to assess the outcomes, outputs, and impacts of policy actions.
- v. **Feedback and Learning Mechanisms:** Establish feedback and learning mechanisms to capture lessons learned best practices, and stakeholder feedback for continuous improvement. Encourage stakeholder engagement, knowledge-sharing, and participatory approaches to foster a culture of learning and innovation in policy implementation.
- vi. **Adaptive Management and Course Correction:** Use monitoring and evaluation findings to inform decision-making and adapt policy interventions as needed. Identify bottlenecks, constraints, and gaps in implementation and develop corrective measures and action plans to address them proactively.
- vii. **Transparency and Accountability:** Ensure transparency and accountability in the monitoring and evaluation process by sharing findings, reports, and recommendations with relevant stakeholders, policymakers, and the public. Promote open dialogue, feedback mechanisms, and mechanisms for addressing grievances or complaints related to policy implementation.
- viii. **Capacity Building:** Build institutional and human capacity for monitoring and evaluation within government agencies, regulatory bodies, and other relevant stakeholders. Provide training, technical assistance, and resources to enhance data collection, analysis, and reporting capabilities and promote a culture of evidence-based decision-making.
- ix. **Integration with Policy Review and Planning:** Integrate monitoring and evaluation activities with policy review and planning processes to ensure that findings inform

policy formulation, revision, and prioritization. Use M&E results to set new objectives, adjust strategies, and reallocate resources based on emerging needs and priorities.

By establishing robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, Sri Lanka aims to enhance accountability, transparency, and effectiveness in the implementation of its Maritime Transport Policy, maximize the impact of policy interventions, and achieve sustainable development outcomes in the maritime sector.

9. Glossary

- I. **Maritime Transport Policy:** A comprehensive set of principles, objectives, and strategies governing a country's maritime affairs, including maritime trade, transportation, security, and environmental protection.
- II. **Port Infrastructure:** Physical facilities and structures within ports, including berths, terminals, warehouses, cranes, and navigation channels, used for the loading, unloading, and storage of cargo and passengers.
- III. **Trade Facilitation:** Measures and processes aimed at simplifying, harmonizing, and expediting the flow of goods, services, and information across borders to reduce trade costs and enhance trade efficiency.
- IV. **Maritime Security:** Protection of maritime activities, assets, and interests from threats such as piracy, terrorism, smuggling, and maritime crimes through surveillance, law enforcement, and regulatory measures.
- V. **Environmental Sustainability:** The practice of using natural resources in a manner that meets current needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, including conservation of ecosystems, reduction of pollution, and mitigation of climate change impacts.
- VI. **International Collaboration:** Cooperation and partnership between countries, organizations, and stakeholders to address common challenges, share resources, and promote mutual interests in the maritime domain.
- VII. **Regulatory Framework:** A system of laws, regulations, policies, and standards governing maritime activities, including licensing, permits, safety regulations, environmental regulations, and customs procedures.
- VIII. **Capacity Building:** Initiatives aimed at enhancing the knowledge, skills, resources, and infrastructure needed to effectively implement maritime policies and address challenges in the maritime sector.
- IX. **Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs):** Collaborative arrangements between public sector entities and private companies for the provision of maritime infrastructure, services, and investments, typically involving risk-sharing and long-term contractual agreements.
- X. **Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E):** Systematic processes for tracking progress, assessing performance, and measuring the effectiveness of maritime policies, programs, and projects in achieving their intended objectives.
- XI. **Stakeholder Engagement:** Involvement of diverse stakeholders, including

government agencies, industry associations, civil society organizations, and local communities, in the policy-making process to ensure inclusivity, transparency, and accountability.

- XII. **Adaptive Management:** Flexible and iterative approach to policy implementation that allows for adjustments, learning, and adaptation based on changing circumstances, feedback, and evaluation findings.
- XIII. **Transparency and Accountability:** Principles of governance that ensure openness, integrity, and responsibility in decision-making processes, resource allocation, and outcomes, fostering public trust and confidence in maritime policies and institutions.
- XIV. **Interagency Coordination:** Collaborative efforts among government agencies and stakeholders to align policies, share resources, and coordinate actions to achieve common maritime objectives and avoid duplication or conflicts of interest.