



Commonwealth
Litter Programme

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Sri Lankan hospitality sector attitudes and legislation related to waste management, specifically plastic waste

Scoping study

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Executive Summary

On the UN website, under Sustainable Development Goal 14 (SDG), it is recognised that Oceans, seas and marine resources are increasingly threatened, degraded or destroyed by human activities, reducing their ability to provide crucial ecosystem services. The deterioration of coastal and marine ecosystems and habitats is negatively affecting human well-being worldwide. Good governance is needed, to ensure that land and marine based activities are conducted, taking into account the need to protect the environment, and ensure that these activities are sustainable going forward.

A change will be required in how humans view, manage and use oceans, seas and marine resources. Some initiatives are already in place, but more are needed to improve the management and control of human activities.

An important threat to oceans comes from marine litter, which include materials such as plastic, metal, wood, paper, glass and rubber, but plastic waste is the dominate category of marine litter, and it is a global problem that needs to be addressed by all nations of the world.

This report looks at the marine litter problems affecting Sri Lanka, which as an island nation, has an extensive coastline, with approximately 40% of the population living within the 2km coastal belt. From the varying initiatives in place within Sri Lanka already, it shows that there is a willingness to address the marine litter challenges, but the skill base to deal with marine litter management needs to be put in place for more rapid progress to be made, and a better appreciation of the marine litter problem needs to be communicated to the general population, and commercial sectors of the Sri Lankan economy, so that they know how they can all contribute to the reduction in marine litter.

As part of the overall initiative to reduce marine litter in Sri Lanka, the hospitality sector can play an important part and make a valuable contribution, by reducing single use plastics, sourcing alternative eco-friendly products, and raising awareness of the marine litter problem within its own workforce, but also the visitors using their venues and facilities.

This report looks at an overview of the hospitality sector in Sri Lanka, a review of the current position of marine pollution, its effects on tourism and developing initiatives and legislation, with suggestions for possible solutions and a way forward.

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1 Overview of Hospitality sector in Sri Lanka

1.1 Importance of tourism for Sri Lanka

The diversified landscapes and natural attractions in Sri Lanka have meant a growing number of visitors to the country in recent years. The tourist arrivals, to Sri Lanka in 2019, amounted to more than 1.9 million, which was a slight decrease on the 2.3 million visitors in 2018 (Sri Lankan Tourist Development Agency, 2021). The contribution of revenue generated through travel and the tourism sector is sizeable, contributing 4.3% of gross domestic product (GDP) each year to the economy, with the potential to grow further. (National Human Resources Development Council, 2020).

In order to cope with providing accommodation for the increasing number of visitors, there has been an increase in the construction of hotels, with Colombo alone having more than 14 hotel construction projects in the pipeline, that are scheduled to be opened by 2022.

Following the destruction that happened to Sri Lanka due to the 2004 tsunami, the Sri Lanka Tourist Board introduced tourism zones that are open for investments. These zones are open to foreign investors and developing these zones will help Sri Lanka to generate revenue.¹

The Sri Lankan government's "Vision 2025", states that the tourism sector has not achieved its full potential. Although the sector is recognised as a major foreign currency earner, it is also recognised that Sri Lanka needs to transform its tourism strategy to increase investment and employment. The new tourism strategic plan aims to establish Sri Lanka as a high-value destination, while making the industry environmentally responsible, to conserve the natural environment and ensure the tourism industry is sustainable.

It has got to be recognised that during 2020, the global COVID-19 pandemic (COVID) has had a huge detrimental effect on tourism, as many countries shut their borders and restricted foreign travel for their citizens. A 2020 survey by the National Human Resources Development Council (NHRDC) of Sri Lanka, looked at the impact that COVID was having on employment within various sectors of the economy within Sri Lanka. They found that within the tourism sector, which provided direct/indirect employment for 600,000 individuals in 2018/19, the impacts of COVID were predicted to have affected between 41%-60% of employees (NHRDC, 2020). With hope now on the horizon from the vaccine roll out across the globe, tourists may soon be able to travel more widely, and Sri Lanka needs to be ready to accommodate those travellers. Travellers will probably be nervous of visiting crowded resorts, and may well opt for the more remote, luxury destinations, like Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka has enormous potential for growth in tourism, with its geographical location and many attractions within a relatively small area. In 2019, Annual tourist numbers had increased almost five-fold since 2008 (Sri Lankan Tourist Development Agency, 2021). However, in order to maintain and protect its natural beauty, a transformation in the tourism strategy is needed for its sustainability. Although there is a recognition and appetite to

¹ <https://www.mordorintelligence.com/industry-reports/hospitality-industry-in-sri-lanka> [accessed 1st March 2021]

preserve the biological wealth of Sri Lanka, the increase of tourist numbers and hotels to accommodate them, will have an important role to play in developing and implementing policies that protect the natural environment, both on land and in the marine environment. This is particularly important because Sri Lanka is one of the world's biodiversity hotspots, owing to its high diversity of ecosystems. There is a high dependence on this biodiversity for tourism². Sri Lanka ratified the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in 1994, and in response to its obligation Sri Lanka developed the '*Strategy for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity*' in 1994, and a biodiversity action plan '*Biodiversity Conservation in Sri Lanka: A Framework for Action*' which was published in 1999, and was later updated, to take into account more recent developments. In 2015/2016 the preparation of Sri Lanka's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) for 2016-2022 took place².

1.2 Hospitality Stakeholders in Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA) – was set up in 2007, as the apex body for Sri Lanka tourism under section 2 of the Tourism Act. It is the government entity authorised to regulate the tourism industry in Sri Lanka, and is also tasked with establishing and developing Sri Lanka as a leading destination for international visitors, tapping into Sri Lanka's potential to expand and enhance its tourism sector, while benefitting investors and supporting communities in a sustainable manner.

Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau (SLTPB) – is a government body responsible for handling all marketing and promotional activities related to the travel and tourism industry of Sri Lanka. The Bureau comprised of representatives from the Tourist Hotels Association of Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka Association of Inbound Tour Operators, Association of Small and Medium Enterprises in Tourism etc. SLTPB's main objectives is marketing and promoting of Sri Lanka directly and indirectly as a tourist and travel destination, and as a gateway to the South Asian regions, making Sri Lanka known as the centre of excellence in tourism management and development in the region.

Sri Lanka Institute of Tourism and Hotel Management (SLITHM) – set up in 1964. Offers training courses to gain qualifications in the hospitality and travel industry.

Sri Lanka Convention Bureau (SLCB) – set up in 2005. Government arm for the development of the meetings industry in Sri Lanka, which functions under the Ministry of Tourism. Its aim is to develop Sri Lanka internationally as a venue for meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions, (MICE). The MICE market is a specialised niche of group tourism dedicated to planning, booking, and facilitating conferences, seminars, and other events, which is a big money maker in the travel industry, and could make a positive contribution to the economy of Sri Lanka, creating employment.

² <https://www.cbd.int/doc/world/lk/lk-nbsap-01-en.pdf> [accessed 8th March 2021]

The Hotel Association of Sri Lanka (THASL) – set up in 1965. Represents 200 hotels and resorts across Sri Lanka. Its mission statement is “To promote and foster tourism and the tourist hotel industry in Sri Lanka for the promotion of commerce and economic development”.

Whole World Water charity – is a social enterprise and UK based charity, founded by and for the hospitality and tourism industry worldwide, focusing primarily on initiatives to provide clean water to all in the developed and developing world by 2030. Although the supply of clean water is their main aim, they are also working on uniting the hospitality and tourism industry to encourage them to reduce/eliminate plastic use.

Travel Agents and Tour Operators – who wish to work with environmentally aware hotels, to champion operating sustainably to protect the planet.

International and Regional Hotels in Sri Lanka – Some have already set up initiatives to reduce single use plastic by removing plastic straws removing plastic water bottles and providing alternative sustainable products within their hotels.

2 Review of current position of marine pollution, its effects on tourism, and developing initiatives or legislation to combat the problem

2.1 Marine litter and tourism

Marine litter is known to have a profound impact on tourism. Its presence decreases the appeal of beaches, attracting less visitors and plunging the revenue for the businesses sustained by tourists. Schuhmann (2012), analysing the impact of waste on tourism in Barbados, showed that the likelihood that tourists would return for another visit was lower if the tourists had experienced marine litter, with a stronger effect on first-time visitors. Another study in Brazil showed that a substantial increase of marine litter could deter not only daily visitors, but also the owners of second houses in particular coastal cities, causing substantial economic losses (up to nearly 40%) (Kreling *et al.*, 2017). In South Africa, Balance *et al.* (2000) found that litter is a primary factor in deciding what beach to visit; even for residents, who were keen to spend time and money to visit a beach further away, (up to 50km), if it was cleaner than their local options.

Garces-Ordonez *et al.* (2018) assessed the tourism impact on litter pollution on eleven Colombian beaches and found that, “*Tourism is an important socioeconomic activity in coastal communities, which deteriorates marine-coastal ecosystem quality when poorly managed, increasing litter pollution on beaches during the main tourist seasons*”. The study found that during the high tourist season, the numbers of people and the quantity of macrolitter pollution increased, compared with the low tourist season. Plastics were the most common litter type identified by respondents, accounting for between 30% - 77% of macrolitter. The study recommended that stronger controls and educational and awareness strategies were needed to reduce litter pollution and prevent ecological and socioeconomic

impacts. While this study was carried out in the Caribbean, it illustrates the pollution caused by tourism, which is replicated the world over.



Figure 1 Examples of macrolitter found on the tourist beaches in Colombia (Garces-Ordóñez *et al.*, 2018)

2.2 Marine litter and microplastics in Sri Lanka

There are only a few studies that assess the presence and impacts of marine litter and microplastics in Sri Lanka. Data was collected by citizen scientists in Sri Lanka, through programmes like the International Coastal Clean-up that showed the presence of plastic bags, paper bags, plastic bottles, caps/lids and food wrappers (Gunasekara *et al.*, 2014). Jang *et al.*, 2018 carried out an island-wide survey of marine litter, which provided an assessment of the marine debris washed ashore on 22 beaches along the coast of Sri Lanka, illustrating the extent of the marine debris pollution. Jayapala and Jayasiri (2018) showed that the marine litter is having an impact on mangroves in several location around the island, leading to abnormal roots, lower seeding density, undergrowth and physical damages.

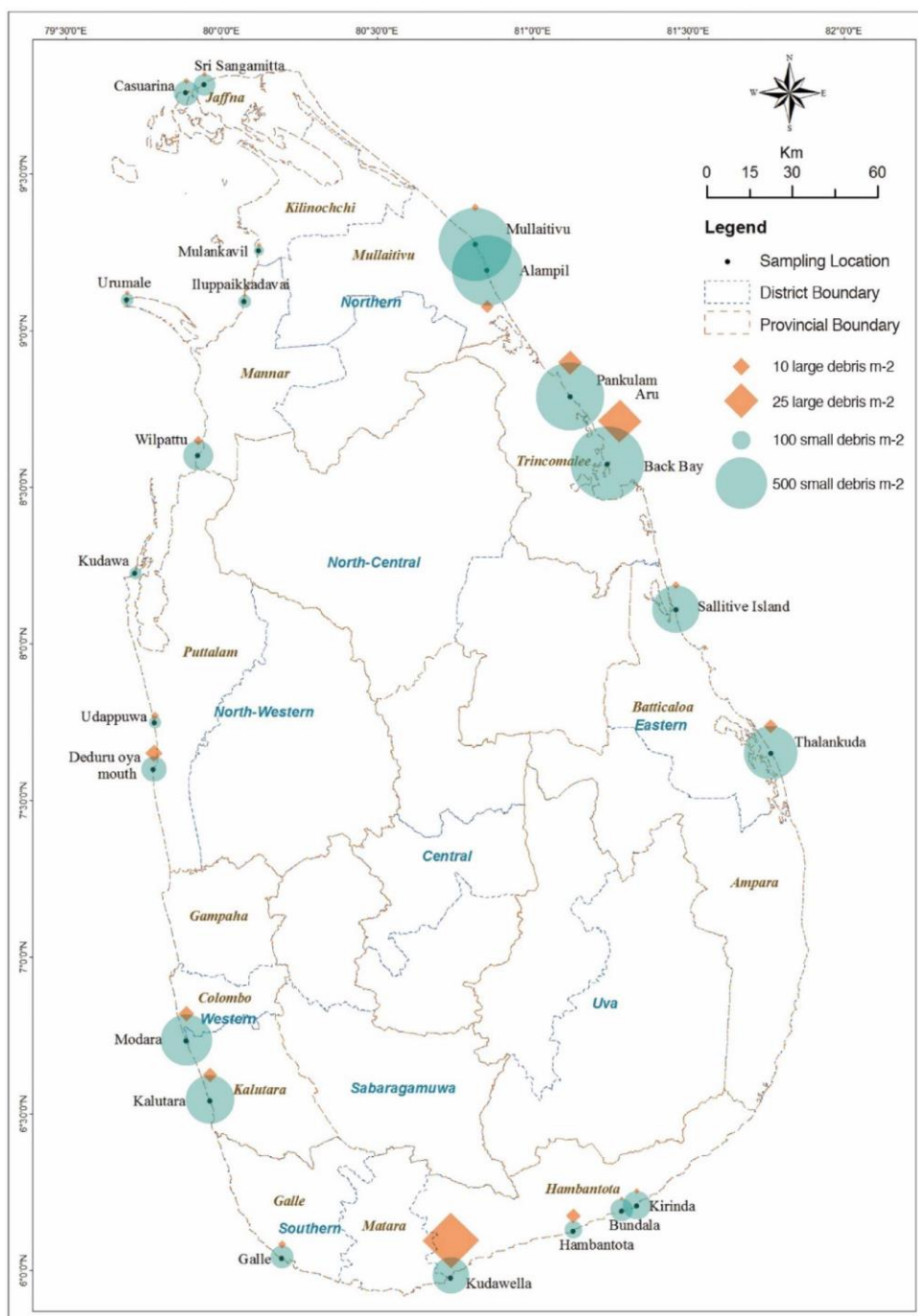


Figure 2 Map of Sri Lanka showing 22 sampling sites with the relative density of large debris (red diamonds) and small debris (blue circles) (from Jang *et al.*, 2018),

Recently, a survey carried out under the CLiP Programme, showed that around the island, plastic is still the most important marine litter issue (Figure 3), and showed the presence of litter on landing sites all around the island (BRT, 2021b). Senanayake *et al.* (2021) also showed the effects of ghost gear (i.e. ALDFG) on dolphins in Sri Lanka.

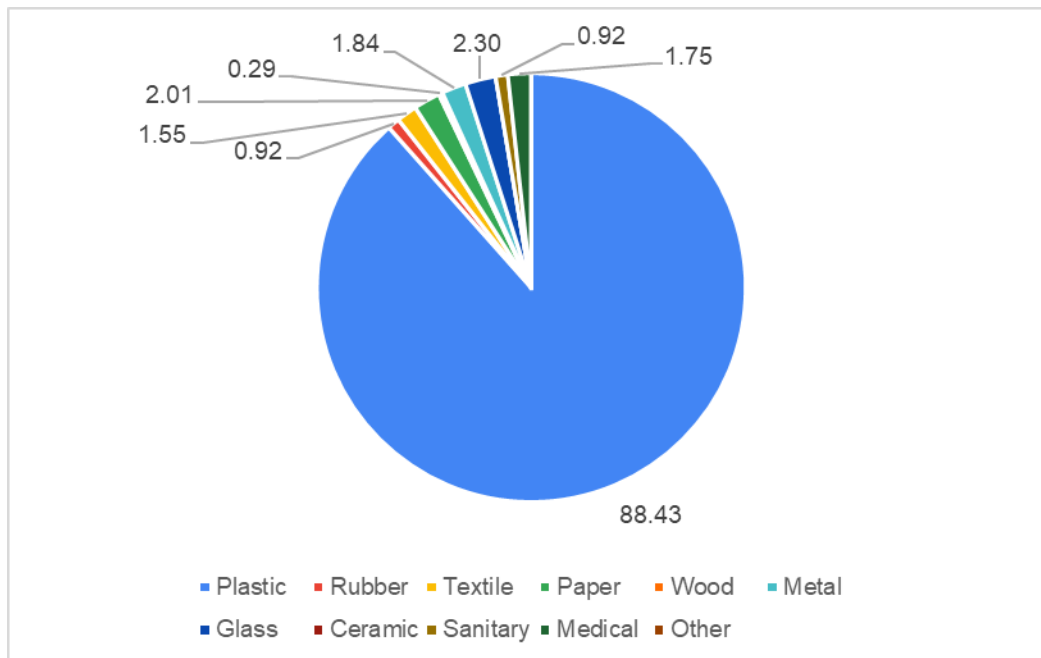


Figure 3 Pie chart showing the Composition of marine litter following OSPAR protocol as measured in 2021 on landing sites in Sri Lanka (BRT, 2021b), which shows over 88% made up of plastic.

Microplastics were also measured. Weerakon *et al.* (2018) showed their presence on sandy beaches, in particular, close to touristic areas. The ecosystem survey carried out in the Sri Lankan coastal waters in 2018 by the Norwegian RV, 'Dr Fridtjof Nansen', revealed contamination of secondary microplastics (caused by fragmentation of bigger pieces) all around Sri Lanka and in particular in the Northwestern region. The survey also showed that microplastics were found at all sampling stations along the Sri Lankan coast; the highest concentrations were discovered in the northwestern seas, while eastern and southern regions recorded lower levels of pollution. Microplastics were also contributing to the fish stock reduction in Sri Lanka, which are estimated to have dropped by 80% (NARA, 2019). Dharmadasa *et al.* (2021) also showed the presence of microplastics in marine protected areas in Sri Lanka, in particular fragments and filaments of polyethylene, polypropylene and polystyrene.

A recent paper (Mafaziya *et al.*, 2020) reviewed many of these papers and used the data to identify gaps in knowledge that should be addressed. Local experts are also publicly calling for a collective effort to improve waste management. For example, the General Manager of the Marine Environment Protection Authority (MEPA) commented that "Making coastal regions of Sri Lanka polythene-free and campaigning to reduce domestic use of plastics are essential to avert a further crisis."³

³ <https://news.mongabay.com/2019/06/microplastics-a-key-factor-in-sri-lankas-plunging-fish-stocks-survey-shows/#:~:text=Microplastics%20and%20overfishing%20are%20the%20leading%20causes%20of,p art%20due%20to%20high%20levels%20of%20microplastic%20contamination>. [accessed 8th March 2021]

2.2.1 Legislation

Having overcome three decades of terrorist conflict, Sri Lanka has now begun its journey towards a sustainable and resilient society. Sri Lanka has been a member state of the UN since 1955, and it is recognised that Sri Lanka is vulnerable to exposure from extreme weather events. Being an island, it is susceptible to the threat of rising sea levels, tsunamis, cyclones, floods, prolonged dry spells and other natural disasters. As part of the United Nation's Strategic Plan in Sri Lanka (United Nation Sri Lanka, 2017), one of the main objectives or areas of focus, is *'to enhance it's resilience to climate change and disasters, and strengthening environmental management.'*

Sri Lanka's exclusive economic zone (EEZ), which stretches up to 200 nautical miles (370 kilometres) off its coast, and spans about 510,000 square kilometres (197,000 square miles), is eight times larger than the island's landmass and is highly vulnerable to pollution.

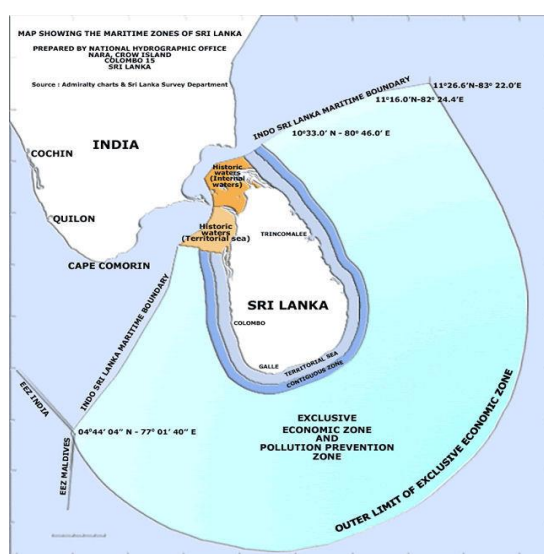


Fig 4: Map showing the maritime zones of Sri Lanka. Source: Admiralty charts & Sri Lanka Survey Department.

A combination of direct and indirect policies, legislations, regulations, and programmes are in place to regulate marine litter management, and there are several agencies that work for the implementation and monitoring of these pieces of legislation. Among these agencies there is the Marine Environment Protection Authority (MEPA) that has the sole responsibility to prevent, control and manage the pollution of the Sri Lanka's marine environment, and is responsible for enforcement of the *'Marine Pollution Environment Act No. 35'* of 2008. Although legal and institutional frameworks are in place, manpower, technical capacity, and skill required for marine litter management are absent. A report by BRT (2021a) shows that although litter is somehow managed on land, marine litter management shows lack of skills in country, especially when referred to work in water and underwater. Consequently, litter in the sea remains a challenge. The same report recommended to provide regular updates on the roles and progress of actions by each agency with a mandate on waste, possibly with the creation of an apex body that can monitor the overall waste management of Sri Lanka.

This apex body, not present at the moment, would bring together and coordinate all the responsibilities currently scattered among many agencies. (BRT, 2021a)

Despite the lack of a strong and unique central coordination, there are internal and external drivers to move Sri Lanka towards a more sustainable future. The National Budget 2018 focuses on a “Blue Green Economy”, envisaged to create an eco-friendly environment where all can co-exist harmoniously. The Government of Sri Lanka has included several Sustainability Environmental Management measures in its national policy framework, ‘Vistas of Prosperity and Splendour 2020’, which aims to integrate Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into the framework. The SDGs were adopted by all United Nations Member States, including Sri Lanka, in 2015, as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030. The Sri Lankan government’s “Vision 2025” provides a vision and the Public Investment Programme, the three-year rolling plan, which aligns significantly with SDGs.

The Sustainable Development Council of Sri Lanka is comprised of some of Sri Lanka’s leading experts in sustainability and aims to *“transform Sri Lanka’s development into a sustainable process that will bring forth an inclusive, thriving, peaceful and environmentally conscious nation,”* by acting on the 17 SDGs set up by the UN in their plan – ‘Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development’, which is a UN plan of action set up in 2015. Of the 17 SDGs listed, number 14 relates to ‘Life Below Water’, with the need to prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution identified, in particular, from land-based activities, through sustainable management of various categories, including tourism⁴.

The Sustainable Development Act 2017 provides the mandate for formulating a national sustainable development policy and strategy. The President appointed the Sustainable Development Council to implement the Act, which sets goals and targets. On the ‘Sustainable Developments Council of Sri Lanka’ website, it states that “The world’s oceans – their temperature, chemistry, currents and life – drive global systems that make the Earth habitable for humankind. Our rainwater, drinking water, weather, climate, coastlines, much of our food, and even the oxygen in the air we breathe, are all ultimately provided and regulated by the sea. Careful management of this essential global resource is a key feature of a sustainable future.” The UN has also supported the National Adaptation Plan for Climate Change Impacts 2016-2025 in Sri Lanka⁵.

⁴ <http://sdc.gov.lk/sustainable-development-goals> [accessed 8th March 2021]

⁵ <https://lk.one.un.org/news/un-partnership-to-strengthen-sri-lankas-environmental-management-and-combat-climate-change/> [accessed 8th March 2021]

3 Possible Solutions

3.1 Existing industry-led initiatives

With the recognition of the importance for a need in the reduction of plastic waste globally, and the part it could play in the fight against global warming, various reports and initiatives have been started.

One such report is the ‘Plastic Reduction Guidelines for Hotels’¹ released by TUI (TUI, 2020). This report looks at the problem of plastic entering the oceans, and focuses on each area of a hotel, from the reception area, to the kitchens, bedrooms and restaurants, making various recommendations on hotels undertaking self-assessments on their use of plastics, ways to reduce plastic use, and setting targets and continuing to monitor plastic use into the future. This report and its recommendations are equally relevant to hotels across the globe, including Sri Lanka. There are other reports available on the subject of best practice for waste management within the tourism sector, for example by the European Commission (Styles *et al.*, 2013).

In Sri Lanka, the Sustainable Travel Sri Lanka Initiative, driven and collaborated by Ayu in the Wild Holidays, is a self-funded initiative. Ayu in the Wild aims to achieve low footfall tourism that brings greater benefits to Sri Lanka. The purpose of the initiative is to collaborate with ethical ventures and travel innovators, with a vision to sustain local economies across Sri Lanka, with the eventual hope to inspire more conscious travel. The initiative collaborates with individuals, non-profit organisations and a collective of hotels who are committed to give back to Sri Lanka.

Membership in the collective is by invitation only, and each property needs to meet the criteria of a Sustainability Trilogy of ‘the island’, ‘the people’, ‘the wild’. The collective includes ventures who create economic opportunities, protect Sri Lankan environment and celebrate the island’s cultures.⁶

3.2 List of hospitality behaviour to reduce the creation of marine litter

3.2.1 Reduce Single-use Plastics

The use of single-use plastics is all about convenience. Plastic is durable, flexible and it addresses hygiene concerns. This is especially apparent in the hospitality industry, where there is a heavy focus on limiting costs and maximising profitability, while matching customers’ needs. For example, hotels offer free toothbrushes and toothpaste which are meant to be thrown out after one or two uses. However, there are also many ways to combat these problems, for example by replacing them with reusable or more eco-friendly alternatives. Plastic straws are a prime example of a single use plastic item that is thrown away after one use. Plastic straws have been banned in several countries, and more eco-friendly alternatives are available that can be substituted, for example bamboo straws, or

⁶ <https://sustainablesrilanka.travel/> [accessed 8th March 2021]

metal or hard plastic (washable) ones. Glass bottles can be given instead of plastic ones in restaurants and in the rooms. Plastic toothbrushes can be replaced by bamboo ones. Reusable or plastic-free drinks coasters can also be used. For shower gels and shampoos, refillable dispensers instead of single use containers could be placed in the room. When single use plastics cannot be avoided, services can be adapted to decrease the use of single use plastics. For example, plastic straws, single use cutlery, pens or bathroom amenities could be provided only on request. The installation of dispensers of drinkable water around the hotels can also encourage the use of refillable bottles instead of plastic ones. Simple initiatives like these can have a large impact on current plastic waste, preventing more waste from the hospitality sector from being generated.

Another way the hospitality industry can help is by demanding and pressuring producers for reduced single use packaging or more recyclable packaging with less plastics, which can then drive the decline in supply. Using suppliers which have a good sustainable product plan, for example a returnable packaging scheme, or reduced plastic packaging use, will help to reduce plastic waste.

An alternative option is using economic incentives to help in the phasing out of single-use plastics. This could be done by charging for single-use bathroom amenities or giving discounts to customers that bring their own bottles and packaging.

3.2.2 Improve waste management

The concept of 3Rs (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) is often seen as the best practice to follow to implement a sustainable waste hierarchy and achieve a sustainable waste management. The 3Rs concept is linked to the concept of circular economy, that aims to promote resource efficiency through keeping resources in use for as long as possible, extracting the maximum value from them and minimising waste. In order to achieve sustainability, consideration needs to be taken by the hospitality sector to identify the steps needed to reduce waste and propose a long-term path/plan for the future waste management and recycling within their structures and companies. The implementation of the plan will need to involve all stakeholders (Government, producers, recyclers, the hospitality sector and consumers) in order to create the necessary infrastructures to manage waste properly. In addition, consumer awareness is necessary, so that people know how to properly reuse and recycle certain products, instead of sending them to landfill or throwing them away in the environment. When these efforts are combined, serious action can take place to reduce plastic waste. The hospitality industry has a key role it can play within the circular economy. Section 3.2.1 shows the importance of promoting and using alternatives to single use plastics where possible, which fits the first R ('reduce'). 'Reducing' waste is at the top of the waste hierarchy because this eliminates the problem at its cause and is therefore the most effective measure. Where waste cannot be avoided, recycling and composting should be implemented.

Steps can be as simple as providing separate bins for recyclable items (water and soda PET bottles, caps/lids, paper, cans) and labelling them correctly to sort the waste and provide to recyclers material that is not contaminated. For businesses that provide food, composting of food waste should also be implemented. This could be a traditional waste stream, where food is collected and sent to composting facilities. However, there are other possible

approaches. For example, food scraps can be sent to local pig farms, if there are any in the locality. Involving and properly informing staff on the recycling process through educating them on the process, will enable them to see the advantages and be more inclined to recycle, leading to less plastic waste going to landfill.⁷

4 The Way Forward

4.1 Proposed Next Steps by the hospitality sector

Collate an assessment tool – The first step to reducing waste is to try and prevent waste in the first place. By completing an assessment, hotels are then aware of the products they currently use to identify their current use of plastics.

Identify alternative products – Once the assessment has been completed, a review needs to take place and consideration needs to be given to cutting down on plastic use, by identifying products that can be reused or are made from more eco-friendly material. This will help to identify ways to reduce plastic waste.

Identify alternative behaviours – A change in the behaviour of the hospitality sector is needed in the way that they supply goods to their guests. Changes such as providing refillable dispensers in guest rooms, instead of issuing single use plastic products to guests, would help reduce plastic use. Guests should be encouraged to rethink their expectations when staying in hotels. Maybe an explanation from the hotel on the changes they are making and the importance to the environment, would then give the visitors more of an appreciation of the problem and solutions. A list of alternative products and behaviours is visible in Table 1.

Table 1 List of Alternative Products & Behaviours

Plastic Items	Alternative products
Room Key cards	Use wooden key cards from a sustainable source
Pens	Use pencils or bamboo pens
All-inclusive wristbands	Use fabric or woven wristbands
Toiletries in rooms	On request only, provide in refillable dispensers
Door hanger sign	Provide made of wood from a sustainable source or bamboo
Room bins	Use compostable bin bags, not plastic

⁷ <https://www.greenhospitality.io/post/plastic-what-can-the-hospitality-industry-do-to-tackle-the-problem-of-plastic-waste> [accessed 8th March 2021]

Hotel brochures/directories in rooms	Use brochures made from paper from a sustainable source, or information via a presentation on room tv, or a phone app.
Mini bars, water in rooms	Provide in glass bottles, a water dispenser, or water in carafes, with glasses provided not single use plastic cups
Tea & coffee in rooms	Do not use single tea bags packaged in plastic or coffee capsules. Use jars in the rooms, and public tea and coffee provision close to the rooms. Tea bags in paper packaging more eco-friendly.
Slippers	On request only and supply from Reception to avoid the need for individual wrapping.
Laundry bags	These should only be available on request and made from cotton, linen or paper
Toothbrush	On demand only and use wooden or bamboo toothbrushes
Pre-portioned food eg. Jam, butter, sachets of sauce etc	Provide in jars, bowls or dispensers where possible, but if packaging, make sure it isn't in plastic.
Housekeeping cleaning products	Buy in bulk and decant for the cleaning teams to reduce cleaning product packaging.
Plastic straws	Only supply on request, and use alternative metal, bamboo or paper versions.

Continuous regular monitoring – Once alternative products and behaviours have been identified and implemented, monitoring and management of waste creation will still need to take place going forward, with the possibilities of continued improvement into the future.

Assess the local waste disposal facilities – Waste management facilities can vary between regions, and so the availability of these facilities, e.g., recycling centres, may restrict or enhance the waste disposal opportunities from the hospitality sector in particular regions. If there is enough demand for a waste management facility in a particular area where it does not presently exist, it may be that if the hospitality sector in that area joined forces, demand could be highlighted to the appropriate authorities to provide the required facilities in the future.

4.2 Proposed Next Steps by Key Stakeholders

Make contact with all relevant stakeholders to gain their buy-in, to raise awareness of the need to reduce plastic waste and the part the Sri Lankan hospitality sector can play in their waste management, specifically plastic waste, to help protect their environment and

the hospitality sector going forward. A reliance on tourism should create interest and the enthusiasm to tackle the marine litter issue going forward to protect future income generation.

Organise a conference with interested parties to promote plastic waste reduction within Sri Lanka, inviting interested parties, including suppliers of eco-friendly products, giving them an opportunity and platform to promote their products to the Sri Lanka hospitality industry.

Provide training courses and workshops to encourage and support the reduction of marine litter initiatives. The Sri Lanka Institute of Tourism and Hotel Management (SLITHM), offers training courses to gain qualifications in the hospitality and travel industry, and preparation of a training package relating to initiatives in support of the reduction of marine litter, that could be incorporated within the qualifications they offer, would ensure awareness was raised right at the start of their careers, for those working within the hospitality sector.

Develop scientific expertise and capacity within Sri Lanka to be able to monitor water quality and micro plastics in the rivers and ocean going forward.

Possible implementation of government enforced laws, e.g., waste taxes, that businesses abide by, would hopefully mean less waste is being produced.

Look into the possibility of a government backed environmental hotel accreditation scheme (if one does not already exist), that looks at key areas and processes of the hotels and how economically friendly they are, which the hotels could then sign up to and then promote to tourists/visitors that they have met that standard. As there is currently a worldwide focus on the environment and how important it is to all, this would give visitors to Sri Lanka assurance that the environment is a key focus.

4.3 Implementation, Monitoring and Reporting

Addressing the use of single use plastic within hotels can be looked at in a five-stage plan:

- 1) Conduct a self-assessment of current products, identifying any single use plastic products.
- 2) Set targets of what they want to achieve in reducing their usage of single use plastics, and set timeframes of when they want to achieve those goals.
- 3) Engage with key stakeholders to help formulate a strategy.
- 4) Measuring progress against goals and strategy is important to monitor progress.
- 5) Evaluate the outcomes and look at what can still be improved going forward.

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