



Voluntary Local Review Singra, Bangladesh



Acknowledgement

Singra Municipality would like to extend its deepest gratitude to ICLEI South Asia for supporting the Voluntary Local Review (VLR) for Singra, Bangladesh. We cannot begin to express our thanks to Ms. Bedoshruti Sadhukhan, Senior Programme Coordinator, ICLEI South Asia, who provided us with technical support and guidance during the execution of the VLR. We also extend our sincere thanks to Mr. Samiuddin Ahmed, Regional Sustainable Development Consultant, UNESCAP, and Ms. Paavani Sanna Reddy, Consultant on Voluntary Local Reviews, UNESCAP, for their invaluable advice during the execution of the task. The Municipality pays their special regards to Md. Jubaer Rashid, Manager, Bangladesh Operations, ICLEI South Asia, Mr. Sadeque Mahmud, Consultant, VLR, ICLEI South Asia, Mr. Binayak Kumar Chakraborty, Administrative Officer, Singra Municipality and the entire core team in the city for their support and cooperation in collating information during the VLR reporting, without which the study would not have been a success. We are grateful for the enthusiasm shown and the efforts taken towards the VLR reporting by the entire team on ground. We are especially thankful for making Singra the first and only municipality in Bangladesh to develop a VLR.

The Municipality would also like to recognise the invaluable assistance of the UNESCAP for providing guidance and technical support for conducting the VLR. The technical support from UNESCAP and other partners also helped the municipality to perform a systematic review of the available information and develop evidence-based recommendations for decision support of different departments of the municipality regarding sectoral policies and programmes. We would also like to pay our special regards to the Hon'ble Prime Minister Ms. Sheikh Hasina for her vision on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) accomplishment and SDG based development planning, as well as Advocate Mr. Zunaid Ahmed Palak, State Minister for Information and Communication Technology Division for his support in the whole process.



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Message from the Hon'ble Minister



State Minister
Information & Commutation Technology Division
Ministry of Posts, Telecommunications & Information Technology
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

More than 50 percent of the world's population now lives in cities and the rate is growing very fast. Cities are responsible to play a very significant role to improve urban operation & services, improve quality of life as well as make a livable & sustainable habitat. Cities generate 80 percent of global GDP, but at the same time, they are also responsible for more than 70 percent of global energy consumption. So, now it's time to integrate the Global Goals and targets into the overall urban developments. However, cities are facing many challenges in the context of achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. So, it is very important to localize the SDGs in order to achieve the global goals for every country.

The vision of a technologically advance nation was envisioned by The Father of our Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, when he spoke in front of world leaders at the 29th UN General Assembly in 1974 that, "we will look to a world where humanity is capable of great success in the era of astounding advances in science and technology. By the equitable distribution of all the resources and technical knowledge of the world, the door to such welfare will be opened where every person will have the minimum guarantee of a happy and respectable life."

Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inherited this welfare philosophy and powerfully reflected through her vision to make Bangladesh an advanced nation. With direct implementation guidance of the Hon'ble ICT Advisor Sajeeb Wazed Joy over the last 13 years, Bangladesh has achieved a remarkable progress on the technological frontier.

Bangladesh is already recognized as a middle-income country through the dynamic leadership of our Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Now, our plan is to achieve the second Perspective Plan 2021-2041 which will be a landmark document over the next twenty years as it paves Bangladesh the way to becoming an upper-middle-income country by 2031 and a knowledge based prosperous country by 2041 in the platinum jubilee of its birth. We are working to integrate SDGs into the national plan. Bangladesh is performing well in various aspects including poverty reduction, gender equality, electricity, sanitation, and annual GDP growth and we hope that Bangladesh will ensure a significant contribution to achieving the Global Goals & Targets through implementing the national goals.

Voluntary Local Review (VLR) is the best process for localizing the SDGs. I would like to explore my gratitude to United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) as they are doing a great job to guide the VLR process. I am greatly delighted to know that, Singra has been enlisted in the VLR process. Singra is very different from other small cities in Bangladesh. Many of their initiatives have been recognized nationally & globally. So, I believe, Singra will be successful in this VLR process as well as will be a model city in achieving the Global Goals.

Think Digital, Be Digital, Build Digital.

(Zunaid Ahmed Palak, MP)

Foreword from Mayor



জনাব মোঃ জান্নাতুল ফেরদৌস
মাননীয় মেয়র
সিংড়া পৌরসভা, নাটোর
বাংলাদেশ।

আমি ভীষণভাবে আনন্দিত যে, প্রথমবারের মত সিংড়া পৌরসভা জাতিসংঘের টেকসই উন্নয়ন লক্ষ্যমাত্রা (এসডিজি) বাস্তবায়নের ভলেন্টারী লোকাল রিভিউ (ভিএলআর) ২০২১ এর একটি পূর্ণাঙ্গ প্রতিবেদন প্রস্তুত করেছে। এটি আমাদের জন্য অত্যন্ত গর্বের বিষয় যে, সিংড়া পৌরসভা বাংলাদেশের একমাত্র পৌরসভা যা জাতিসংঘের ইকনোমিক এন্ড সোশ্যাল কমিশন ফর এশিয়া এন্ড দি প্যাসিফিক (UN ESCAP) কর্তৃক ভিএলআর রিপোর্টিং এ অন্তর্ভুক্ত হয়েছে। ইকলী সাউথ এশিয়া (ICLEI South Asia) এবং UN ESCAP এর সার্বিক সহযোগিতায় চলমান কোভিড-১৯ (COVID-19) মহামারী সময়ের মধ্যেও প্রতিবন্ধকতাসমূহ কাটিয়ে সিংড়া পৌরসভায় অবস্থিত বিভিন্ন প্রতিষ্ঠান হতে তথ্য সংগ্রহ এবং বিশ্লেষণ করে প্রতিবেদনটি প্রস্তুত করা সম্ভব হয়েছে, যা অত্যন্ত প্রসংশনীয়।

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকারের মাননীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রী জননেত্রী শেখ হাসিনা ডিজিটাল বাংলাদেশ গড়ার যে প্রত্যয় তথা “ভিশন-২০২১” এবং “ভিশন-২০৪১” বাস্তবায়নের যে মহাপরিকল্পনা গ্রহণ করেছেন তা সফল করতে জাতিসংঘ প্রদত্ত টেকসই উন্নয়ন লক্ষ্যমাত্রা (এসডিজি) বাস্তবায়নের কোন বিকল্প নেই। সেই লক্ষ্যে, সিংড়া পৌরসভা নাগরিক সেবার মান বৃদ্ধি, সেবাসমূহ সহজ ও আধুনিকীকরণ, টেকসই অবকাঠামো উন্নয়ন, পরিবেশ ও জলবায়ু-বান্ধব প্রকল্প বাস্তবায়ন, স্বাস্থ্য ও শিক্ষার মান বৃদ্ধি, জননিরাপত্তা নিশ্চিতকরণ, বেকার নারী-পুরুষদের আত্ম-কর্মসংস্থানসহ অসংখ্য উন্নয়ন কাজ বাস্তবায়ন করে আসছে। সিংড়া পৌরসভা কর্তৃক বাস্তবায়িত ইলেকট্রিক পাবলিক ট্রান্সপোর্ট প্রকল্পটি আজ দেশ এবং বিদেশে বিশেষ ভাবে সমাদৃত হয়েছে, যা অত্যন্ত গৌরবের এবং এর মাধ্যমে নগর পর্যায়ে যোগাযোগ সুবিধাও বৃদ্ধি পেয়েছে। আমি আন্তরিকভাবে কৃতজ্ঞতা জানাতে চাই মাননীয় আইসিটি প্রতিমন্ত্রী জনাব এডভোকেট জুনাইদ আহমেদ পলক (এমপি) মহোদয়কে। কারণ, শহরের প্রতিটি উন্নয়নের ক্ষেত্রে তাঁর প্রত্যক্ষ ও পরোক্ষ সহযোগিতা এবং দিকনির্দেশনার কারণেই সিংড়া পৌরসভা আজ জাতীয় এবং আন্তর্জাতিকভাবে স্বীকৃতি পাচ্ছে।

এই প্রতিবেদনটির মাধ্যমে সিংড়া পৌরসভা তাদের ভবিষ্যৎ উন্নয়ন কর্মকাণ্ডসমূহ টেকসই উন্নয়ন লক্ষ্যমাত্রার সাথে সঙ্গতিপূর্ণ ভাবে বাস্তবায়ন এবং জাতীয় লক্ষ্যমাত্রা পূরণে সক্ষম হবে। এর পাশাপাশি, পৌরসভা কর্তৃক গৃহীত উদ্যোগসমূহ আন্তর্জাতিক পরিসরে উপস্থাপন করা হবে ভেবে আজ আমি অত্যন্ত আনন্দিত। বাংলাদেশের অন্যান্য শহর, পৌরসভাসমূহ আমাদের এই প্রসংশনীয় এবং সফল উদ্যোগ সমূহকে অনুকরণ করবে এটাই আমার বিশ্বাস।

ভিএলআর প্রতিবেদন প্রস্তুতিতে সিংড়া পৌরসভাসহ সম্পৃক্ত সকল প্রতিষ্ঠান সমূহের কর্মকর্তাগণদের আমার পক্ষ থেকে আন্তরিক কৃতজ্ঞতা ও ধন্যবাদ জানাচ্ছি।

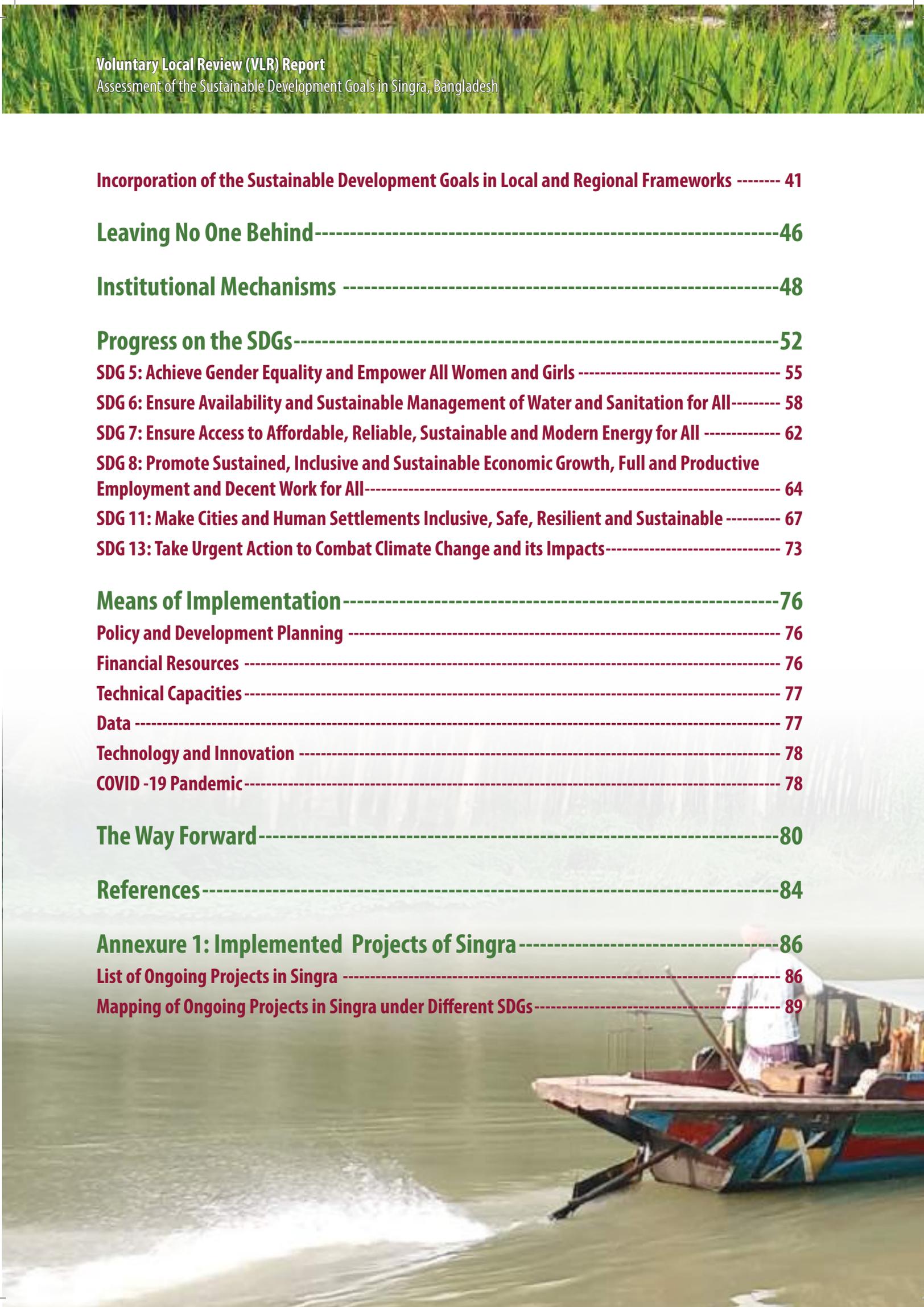
পরিশেষে, এই ভিএলআর রিপোর্টিং এর ধারাবাহিকতা বজায় রাখার মাধ্যমে সিংড়া পৌরসভা টেকসই উন্নয়ন লক্ষ্যমাত্রা অর্জনে আরো সফল হবে এবং বিশ্বের সকল পর্যায়ে সমাদৃত হবে এই প্রত্যয় ব্যক্ত করছি।

(জনাব মোঃ জান্নাতুল ফেরদৌস)

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Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ATM	Automated Teller Machine
BBS	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
BDT	Bangladeshi Taka
BPDB	Bangladesh Power Development Board
BRAC	Building Resources Across Communities
BREB	Bangladesh Rural Electrification Board
BRDB	Bangladesh Rural Development Board
BTCL	Bangladesh Telecommunication Company Limited
BWDB	Bangladesh Water Development Board
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CNG	Compressed Natural Gas
CRS	City Resilience Strategy
DPP	Development Project Proposal
DGHS	Directorate General of Health Services
DPHE	Department of Public Health Engineering
FWA	Family Welfare Assistants
FYP	Five Year Plans
FY	Financial Year
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GED	General Economics Division
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
GCoM	Global Covenant of Mayors
HH	Household
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IT	Information Technology
ITC	International Terrestrial Cable
LED	Light-emitting Diode
LGED	Local Government Engineering Department
LDC	Least Developed Countries



MSW	Ministry of Social Welfare
MWR	Ministry of Water Resources
NPA	National Plan of Action
NPBS	Natore Palli Bidyut Samity
NPT	National Priority Targets
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NSO	National Statistical Organisation
PEA	Poverty-Environment Action
SPV	Solar Photovoltaics
PD	Persons with Disabilities
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SC	Standing Committee
TLCC	Town Level Coordination Committee
ToT	Training of Trainers
UDD	Urban Development Directorate
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
SD	Sub-District
USD	United States Dollar
VLR	Voluntary Local Review
VNR	Voluntary National Review
WSSA	Water Supply and Sewerage Authority
WaSH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WC	Ward Committee



Highlights

Bangladesh submitted its second Voluntary National Review (VNR) Report on the progress made in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in 2020. Singra Municipality is the first local government in Bangladesh to develop a Voluntary Local Review (VLR) report. The VLR process has helped to further the city's efforts to localise SDG goals and align its development vision with the Agenda 2030. It has also helped to demonstrate Singra's capacity to accelerate the pace of achieving the SDG targets of the national government.

Singra Municipality formulated a Core Team consisting of relevant municipal officials to develop the VLR report. In consultation with local stakeholders, the Core Team identified SDGs 5 (Gender Equality), 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) and 13 (Climate Action) as the priority SDGs for review in this report. Localized Indicators were developed to measure the progress in achieving the targets set for the priority SDGs. The core team collected data for the selected indicators from different departments of Singra Municipality and other government agencies, and analysed it to identify major challenges in achieving the above-mentioned six SDGs as well as administrative bottlenecks within the municipality that were hindering progress.

The total annual budget of Singra Municipality for 2020-21 is BDT 234,624,363 or USD 2.7 million and the amount of money allocated to the six SDGs was USD 1,037,548. Out of that, Singra has allocated an extensive amount (86.78%) for SDG 11 while the lowest amount was disbursed for SDG 8 (0.11%).

The assessment of SDG 5 in the city has revealed that Singra Municipality is working, in line with the national government, to empower women and increase their participation in local governance as well as in decision-making processes, keeping 25% of the seats on the municipal council reserved for women. But it aims to have women contest from all seats and not just the seats that are legally mandated/reserved. This will help to bring about greater discourse on issues related to women and greater allocation of funds for women's development in the city. The Municipality plans to remove cultural and institutional barriers to promote women's participation in local politics. It will also prioritize access to education and income generating opportunities by building technical capacity of women and improving economic opportunities, so that women can have greater control over their lives with financial security. Although reported child marriages is zero in Singra, the city has awareness campaigns to discourage child marriage. The city is undertaking technical training for 200 women per year, with a target of reaching out to 5000 women by 2030. In 2020, Singra Municipality spent USD 2,356 (BDT 200,000) on women's empowerment, maternal health and other gender related activities.

Singra Municipality is the first local government in Bangladesh to develop a Voluntary Local Review (VLR) report.

Singra municipality has ensured 95% of the population have electricity coverage in 2021 and by 2030, the city aims to achieve 100% coverage.

In the case of SDG 6, it has been observed that only 7.8% households have access to piped water supply, 85.9% of the population access water through tube wells. Achieving the target to ensure 100% access to safe drinking water supply and sanitation including tackling pollution at its source will require immediate actions by the policymakers and decision makers. Sanitation coverage in the city is about 80%. The city aims to ensure that 100% of the population will use safely managed sanitation services by 2030. To achieve this, Singra municipality aims to set up low-cost sanitary latrines in the town, construct community toilets and public toilets separately for men and women and develop a faecal sludge treatment plant. According to the previous budget year 2020-21, Singra municipality spent around 0.65% of its budget for the purpose of water and sanitation, which is significantly low. Improving water and sanitation services will help to accelerate the overall city development and draw attention of private sector donors.

Singra municipality has ensured 95% of the population have electricity coverage in 2021 and by 2030, the city aims to achieve 100% coverage. In the case of SDG 7, Singra has also undertaken three projects with the objective of increasing the share of renewable energy in the total energy consumption by enhancing the availability and accessibility of e-vehicles for local transport and expanding the coverage of solar streetlights in the city. Solar PV systems at the household level are also promoted by the Municipality. This will reduce dependency on the national grid and contribute towards sustainable energy goals. The city has spent USD 6,243 (BDT 530,000) on energy and power supply, street lighting, and renewable energy in the previous financial year. Singra Municipality plans to initiate an energy audit which would help the city to generate baseline information for future development plans.

SDG 8 needs to be given high priority by the municipality. The budget allocation for SDG 8 related projects is the lowest amount which is 0.11%. A large proportion of people in the labour force - about 16% - is engaged in the informal sector in Singra. Furthermore, 6.07% of the labour force are children. Though the municipality is implementing initiatives like microfinance support with the help of local NGOs, providing training to informal labour to become entrepreneurs, more support from national government and development partners is needed to overcome the issue of child labour. The municipality has spent USD 9,778 (830,000 BDT) for activities under the SDG 8 in the previous financial year.

Singra municipality has allocated the largest sum of budget 86.78% (of the total amount spent on the 6 priority SDGs) for the SDG 11. The municipality is focusing on safe and affordable housing, building resilient economies, sustainable and affordable public transport, creating green public spaces, sustainable urban services, and in general improving urban planning in participatory and inclusive ways. Inclusive and participatory planning is carried out through the engagement of citizens in public meetings through Town Level Coordination Committee (TLCC) and Ward Committee (WC). Significant action has to be taken on solid waste management since there is no segregation, treatment or scientific disposal facilities. 83.34% of the waste is collected and disposed of in an open dumpsite. A large investment is also required in the public transport system. The city is planning to introduce e-vehicles as the major means of transport, while also being cognizant of issues of accessibility of poorer sections of the population, and small lanes. Solar recharging points and parking areas are needed. The municipality has also developed operational guidelines for e-vehicles. A large investment is also required to improve the

open spaces in the city. Currently there is only 0.15 acre of open space for public use and the city plans to extend green spaces.

For the SDG 13, Singra municipality had developed a City Resilience Strategy and Singra Municipality is the signatory member of the Global Covenant of Mayors (GCoM) for Climate & Energy. As part of the GCoM, Singra mandatorily reports on their local level climate actions annually. Because flooding is a regular issue in Singra, the municipality will develop a Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy and has set a target to reduce the number of people impacted by disasters by 10% by 2025. As Singra is located within a wetland region, the city frequently suffers from the damage of flood, an extended city protection dam is being constructed for the protection of the city against flooding.

The VLR process has also exposed that the development programmes of the city are not aligned with the draft master plan of the city and national policies. Selection of annual development projects are made through multiple consultation meetings with TLCC, WC and SC members, but the annual development budget is prepared based on the availability of funds from the line ministries. This often results in a disconnect between plans and allocation. To address this issue, integrated development plan that considers the sustainability of all sectors together is required in the city and a holistic strategic development plan is needed. Financial resources from different sources need to be aligned with the municipal development trends and city's long-term plan. One of the major hurdles in the achievement of SDG targets in the city is the lack of trained municipal staff and their understanding of sustainable urban development. To overcome this challenge, the municipality can explore partnerships with private entities who can support implementation of prioritised programmes.

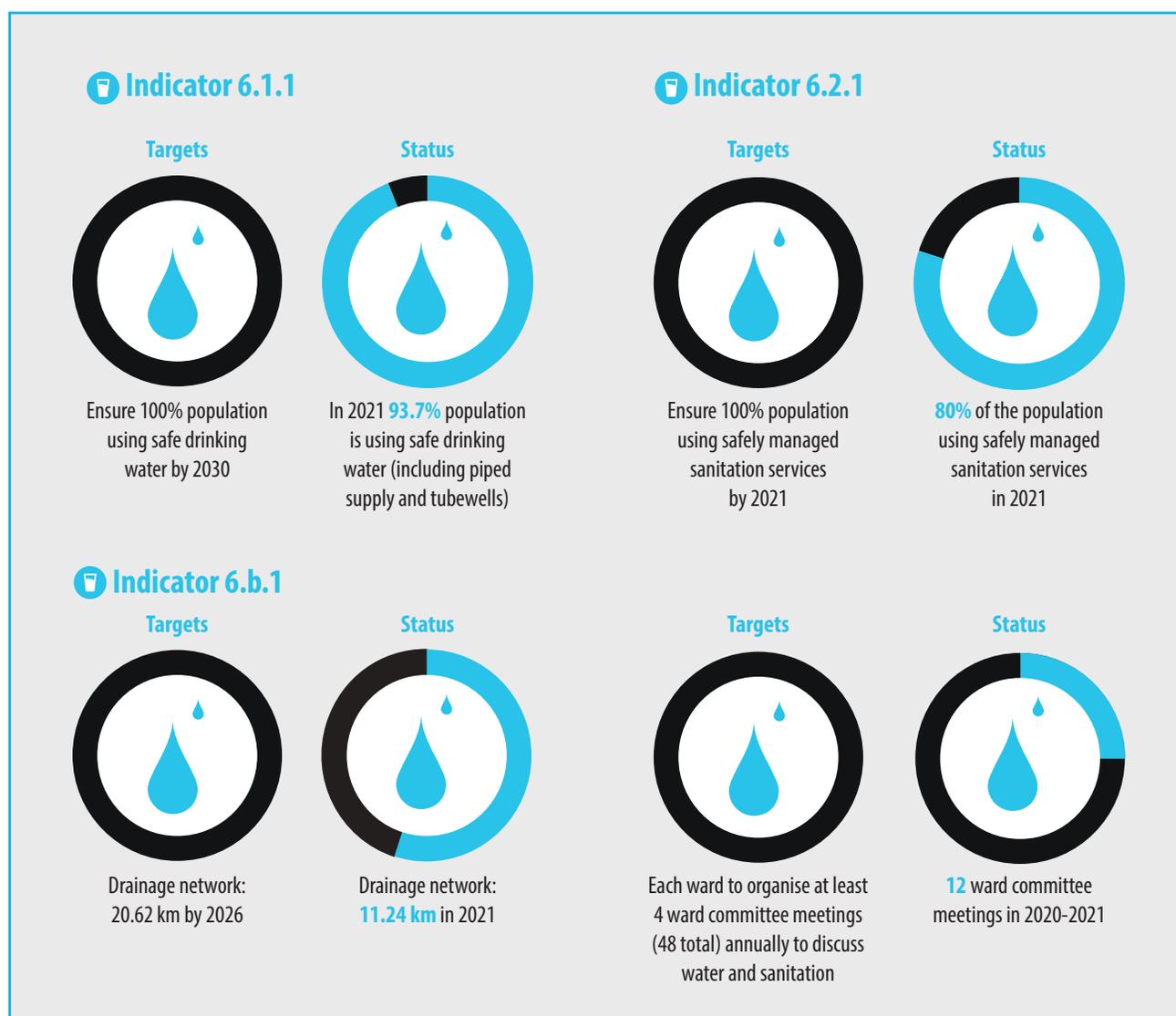
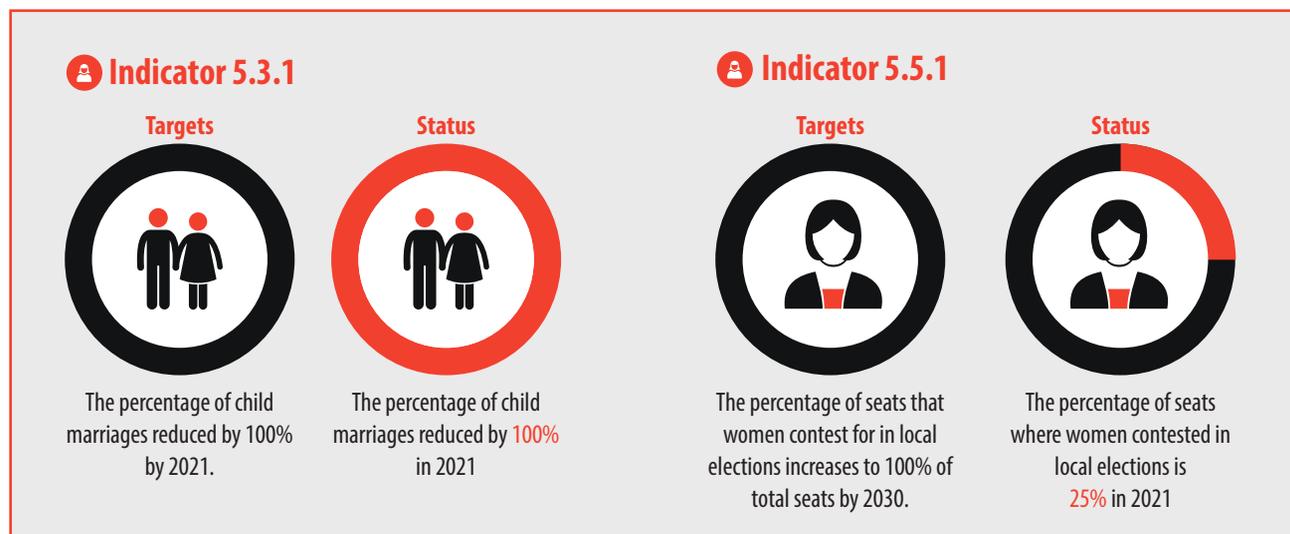
Data management in an organised way is another major challenge for Singra. During the VLR process, the city has realised that disaggregated data needs to be maintained in a structured manner to be able to measure progress and also develop VLR reports in future.

Improving governance processes, inclusive planning, better financial allocations, stronger collaboration with partners and a robust data management system will help the Singra municipality to move towards a sustainable future.

The city will develop a Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy and has set a target to reduce the number of people impacted by disasters by 10% by 2025.

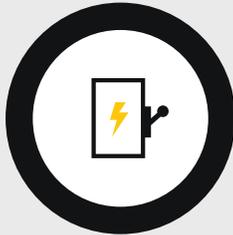


Status of SDGs in Singra at a Glance



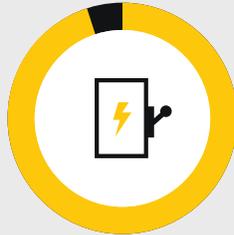
Indicator 7.1.1

Targets



100% electricity coverage by 2030

Status



95% Percentage of Electricity Connection

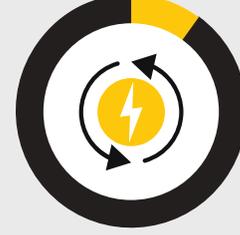
Indicator 7.2.1

Targets



Increase the percentage of renewable energy share in total energy consumption to 20% by 2030.

Status

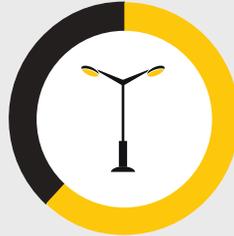


Renewable energy share in the total energy 1.90% (2020)

Indicator 7.2.1

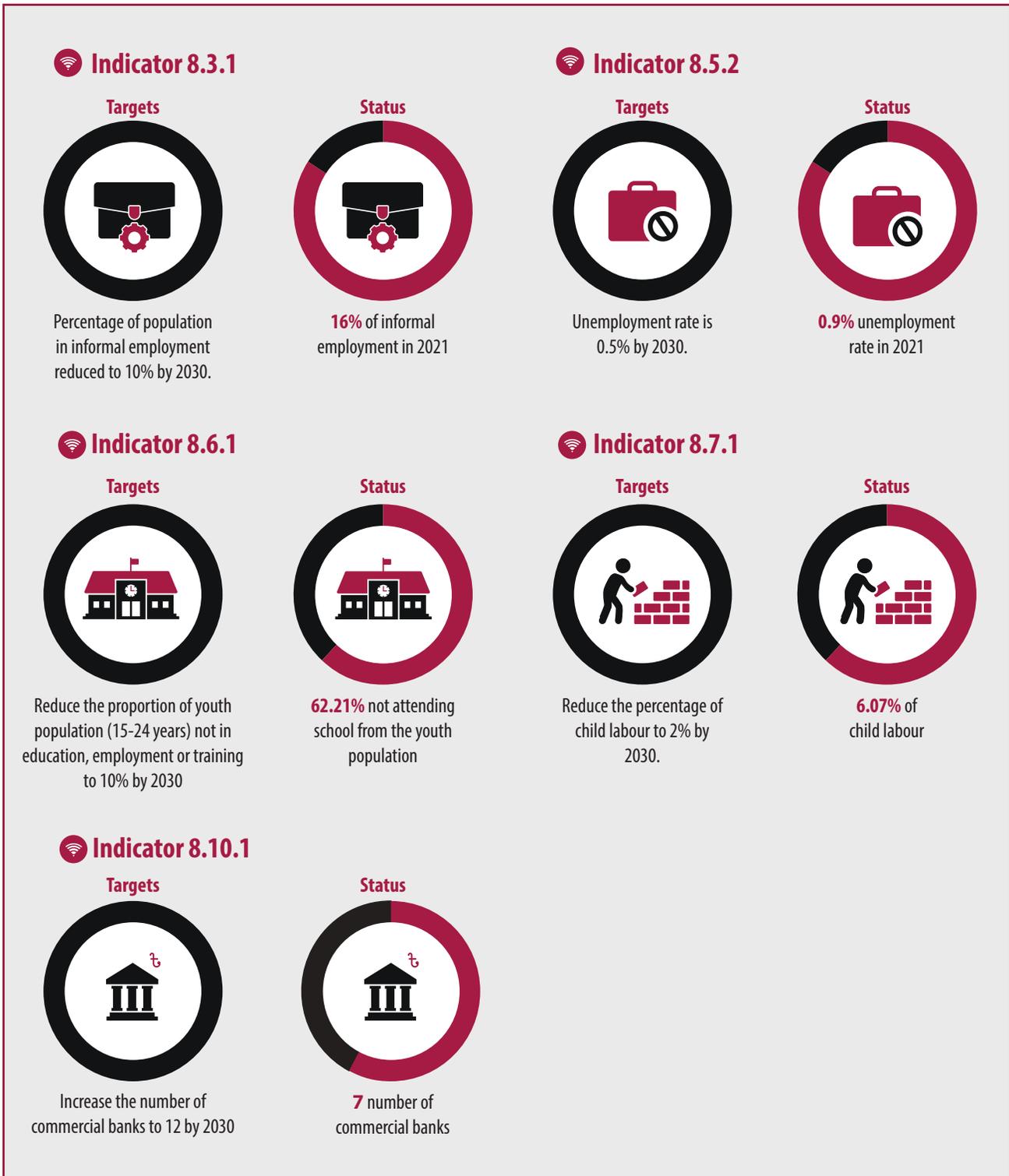


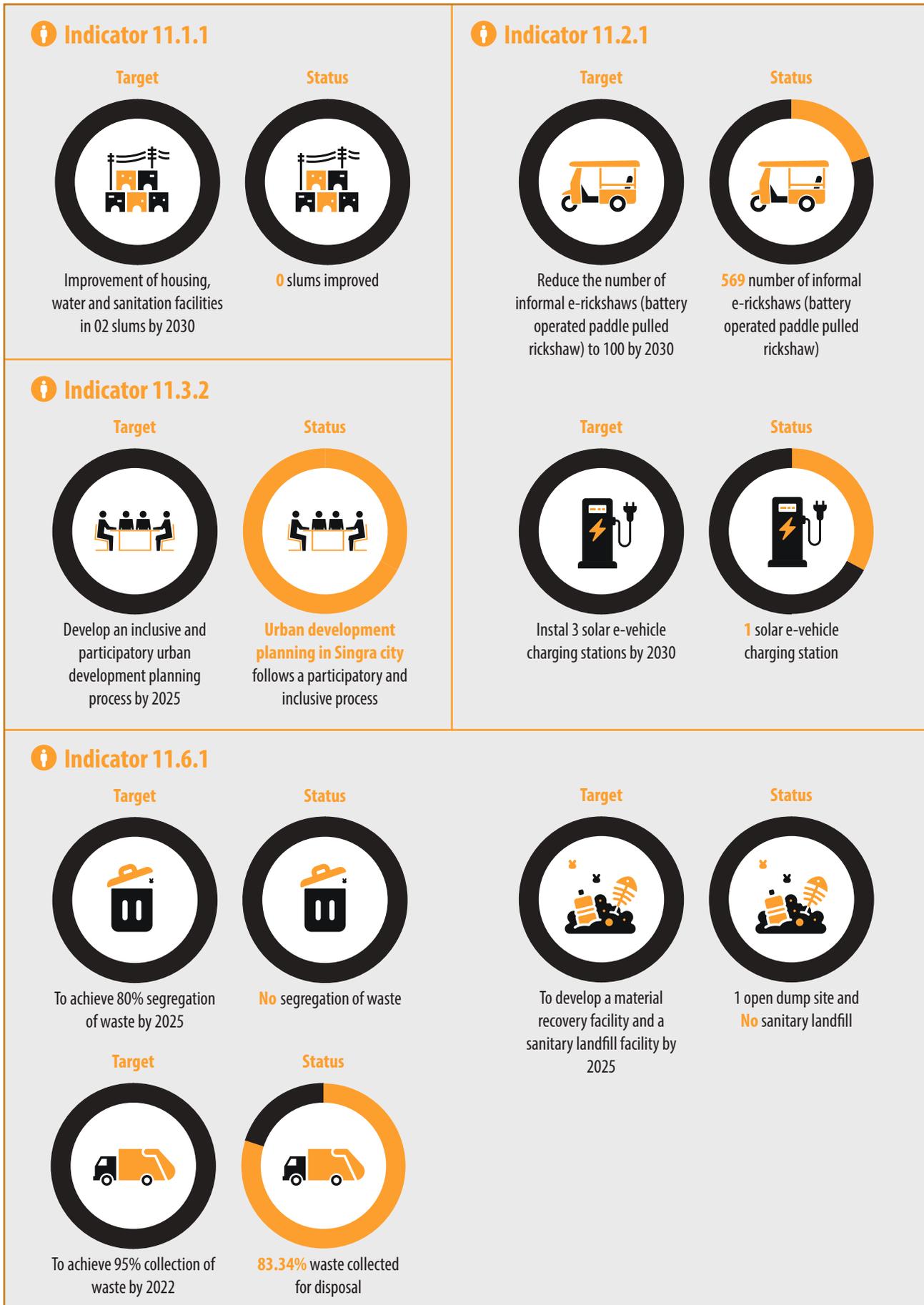
Ensure 1000 solar street lights by 2030



621 solar street light installed in 2021







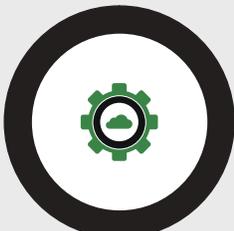
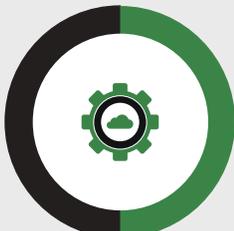
Indicator 11.7.1

<p>Target</p>  <p>Increase the area of open space to 10 sq m per capita</p>	<p>Status</p>  <p>Open space per capita 0.012 sq.m</p>	<p>Target</p>  <p>Develop 1 children's park by 2030</p>	<p>Status</p>  <p>No children's park</p>
<p>Target</p>  <p>Develop 1 stadium by 2030</p>		<p>Status</p>  <p>No stadium</p>	

Indicator 11.b.1

<p>Targets</p>  <p>Reduce the number of population impacted by disasters by 10% by 2025</p>	<p>Status</p>  <p>23% household affected by flood in 2019-2020</p>
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Indicator 13.2.1

<p>Target</p>  <p>Develop and review climate action plans at 2 years interval</p>	<p>Status</p>  <p>City Resilience Strategy prepared in 2017; no review conducted</p>
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Introduction



Introduction

The municipality has implemented several initiatives to strengthen its resilience to climate change like solar panel street lights, electric transport (including e-rickshaws and e-ambulances), and afforestation.

The small municipality of Singra sits in the famous Chalan Beel Wetlands located in Natore district in Rajshahi Division, Bangladesh. The rich fertile soil around the wetlands is ideal for agriculture and fishing, and many in Singra Municipality depend on the wetlands for their livelihood. However, this unique geographical location also makes the municipality particularly vulnerable to climate change and related development challenges.

Singra Municipality is forward looking in its approach to development and has been striving for several years to ensure that the municipal development is sustainable, resilient and inclusive. Singra Municipality is now the first in Bangladesh to undertake the Voluntary Local Review of SDGs. A Master Plan - "Singra Paurashava Master Plan (2011-2031)" - was developed by the Local Government Engineering Department of Bangladesh in 2015. However, the Master Plan is pending approval from the national government because it has not been accepted by the local government. Despite this, the municipality has implemented several initiatives to strengthen its resilience to climate change. These include: solar panel street lights, electric transport (including e-rickshaws and e-ambulances), and afforestation, among others. To successfully design and implement these initiatives and promote environmental conservation, Singra Municipality partnered with a wide range of partners, including local volunteer groups engaged in the conservation of Chalan Beel as well as international and national agencies such as Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), Building Resources Across Communities (BRAC), Asian Development Bank (ADB), and the World Bank (WB). In line with the Development Project Proforma (or guidelines) for development projects by the Government of Bangladesh, Singra has also adopted Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the guiding principle: 'leaving no one behind' to inform all its development efforts. This has allowed the city to link all development projects to the achievement of the SDGs. For instance, the solar street lighting programme is linked to SDG 7 of Affordable and Clean Energy while the electric vehicles contribute to SDG 7 as well as SDG 1 of No Poverty by promoting livelihood opportunities.

Following the submission of the second Voluntary National Review in 2020 by the Government of Bangladesh, Singra Municipality also decided to undertake a review of the city's contribution to the achievement of the SDGs. However, this decision coincided with the outbreak of the second wave of COVID-19, which had a negative impact on not only health but also the economy. Preliminary evidence points to loss of income and COVID-19 – induced poverty, as well as disruption to basic education and access to services. Closure of schools has disproportionately affected girls. Addressing the negative impact and accelerating SDG achievement will require concerted effort, specifically from municipal governments.

The review was conducted despite the challenges due to the pandemic. Virtual meetings were held by the core team to take stock of the current level of SDG achievement and identifies measures to address gaps and accelerate the achievements, specifically in the post-pandemic context

Bangladesh and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

As a part of the commitment of Bangladesh to achieve the SDGs, the country established the Inter-Ministerial Committee on SDGs to lead and monitor implementation. An innovative SDGs tracker (sdg.gov.bd), a web-based data repository system, was launched to assist the monitoring of the implementation of SDGs in Bangladesh. All data generating institutions, mostly at the national level are connected to provide data on the platform. A technical working committee, under the Director General of Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, reviews and authenticates the data submitted in the SDG tracker before publishing. The Bureau of Statistics also has an 'SDG Cell' to coordinate the overall SDGs data related activities in Bangladesh¹.

The inter-ministerial committee - Sustainable Development Goals Implementation and Review Committee - coordinates SDGs implementation and review headed by the Principal Coordinator (SDGs Affairs) at the Prime Minister's Office². The General Economics Division (GED) of the Bangladesh Planning Commission provides secretarial support to the committee.

The country has also integrated SDGs in national policies, including in the five-year plans (FYP). In addition, Bangladesh has also developed a National Action Plan for SDG Implementation that is being implemented through the five year plans of the country. In the 7th FYP, 14 of the 17 SDGs were thematically aligned to the priorities of the FYP. It strives for just, equitable and inclusive economic growth with appropriate measures for protection of the environment. The 8th FYP (2020-2025), developed in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, is guided by the principle of no one left behind and is geared towards addressing the negative impact of the pandemic on poverty and inequality. It reflects the objectives and targets of SDGs and New Urban Agenda. It focuses on developing inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable communities with equal rights and access to benefits of spatial development, institutional development, infrastructure and service provision, urban land and housing development, urban environmental improvement, and climate change and disaster management. This means that Bangladesh's efforts to implement the FYP will also help the country to meet its international commitment to achieve SDGs.

In addition to national level policies and institutional arrangements, the country has also taken steps to further localize SDGs at sub-national level, particularly at the District and Upazila (Sub-District) level. The Government of Bangladesh approved 40 (39+1) priority indicators for localization of SDGs. 39 indicators were selected, and they are expected to

The Government of Bangladesh approved 40 (39+1) priority indicators for localization of SDGs.

Natore District, where Singra Municipality is located, has successfully applied an approach to bring different government offices and stakeholders together to identify and address local issues as part of achieving SDGs commonly called the Natore Model.

reinforce or accelerate the achievement of all SDG targets. Some of the 39 indicators are selected directly from the global SDG indicator framework and others are modified to suit the Bangladesh context. The additional (+1) indicator reflects the “leaving no one behind” principle. The districts and sub-districts identified the most vulnerable area or sector or group of people lagging behind and not covered by regular activities of the government. The +1 indicator facilitates targeted interventions to address the identified vulnerability and dedicate resources for such interventions.

Awareness programmes through workshops at the Division and District levels were conducted to enable officials to select the targets and prepare corresponding action plans to achieve the targets of the SDGs. Divisional level Training of Trainers (ToT) was conducted, and the country is investing in developing action plans at different levels of the government, including Upazila Action Plan and the District Action Plan for SDGs.

Natore District, where Singra Municipality is located, is one of the districts leading on SDG localization. The district has successfully applied an approach to bring different government offices and stakeholders together to identify and address local issues as part of achieving SDGs commonly called the **Natore Model**³. Singra Municipality is the first in the municipality in the Natore District as well as in the country to undertake a review of the achievements till date and chart a path for accelerated achievement of SDGs in the evolving pandemic context.

Till date, Bangladesh has submitted two Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) on the country’s efforts to achieve SDGs. Bangladesh developed its first Voluntary National Review (VNR) and presented it at the United Nation High Level Political Forum (UN HLPF) in 2017. The First VNR Report highlighted the country’s “whole of society” approach for implementation and attainment of the SDGs, as well as the initiatives of the country to localize the SDGs in line with domestic development plans and strategies. It estimated that Bangladesh would need around USD 928.48 billion worth of additional resources for achieving SDGs by 2030.

The second VNR Report ‘Accelerated action and transformative pathways: Realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development’ was submitted in 2020. The Second VNR highlighted the great strides taken by the country towards localization of SDGs, and promotes the ‘Natore Model’ for enhancing localisation of SDGs at the district level. It also highlights the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework by the Government of Bangladesh which has set targets for SDGs and highlights three milestone targets for 2020, 2025 and 2030 which also marks the end periods of 7th, 8th and 9th Five Year Plans respectively.

About Singra Municipality

Singra Municipality is a small municipality spread over 22.5 sq.km, located within the flood plain of Atrai River in Natore district of Bangladesh. The municipality is surrounded by the famous moving wetland Chalan Beel. The Chalan Beel is a 28 sq km extensive low-lying wetland area that receives inflows from 47 rivers and waterways. During the rainy season, the wetland swells to 368 sq. km. and floods four adjacent districts of Rajshahi, Pabna, Sirajganj and Natore. The core of Chalan Beel (i.e. the 28 sq km dry season area) lies

between Singra upazila and the north bank of River Gumanai. Because of the continuous movement of the wetland, the city is partially covered in water for a part of the year, while at other times, it is relatively dry.

The sediment and silt build-up from the inflows makes the region extremely fertile, and ideal for agriculture and fishing. People in this region have developed a unique lifestyle in

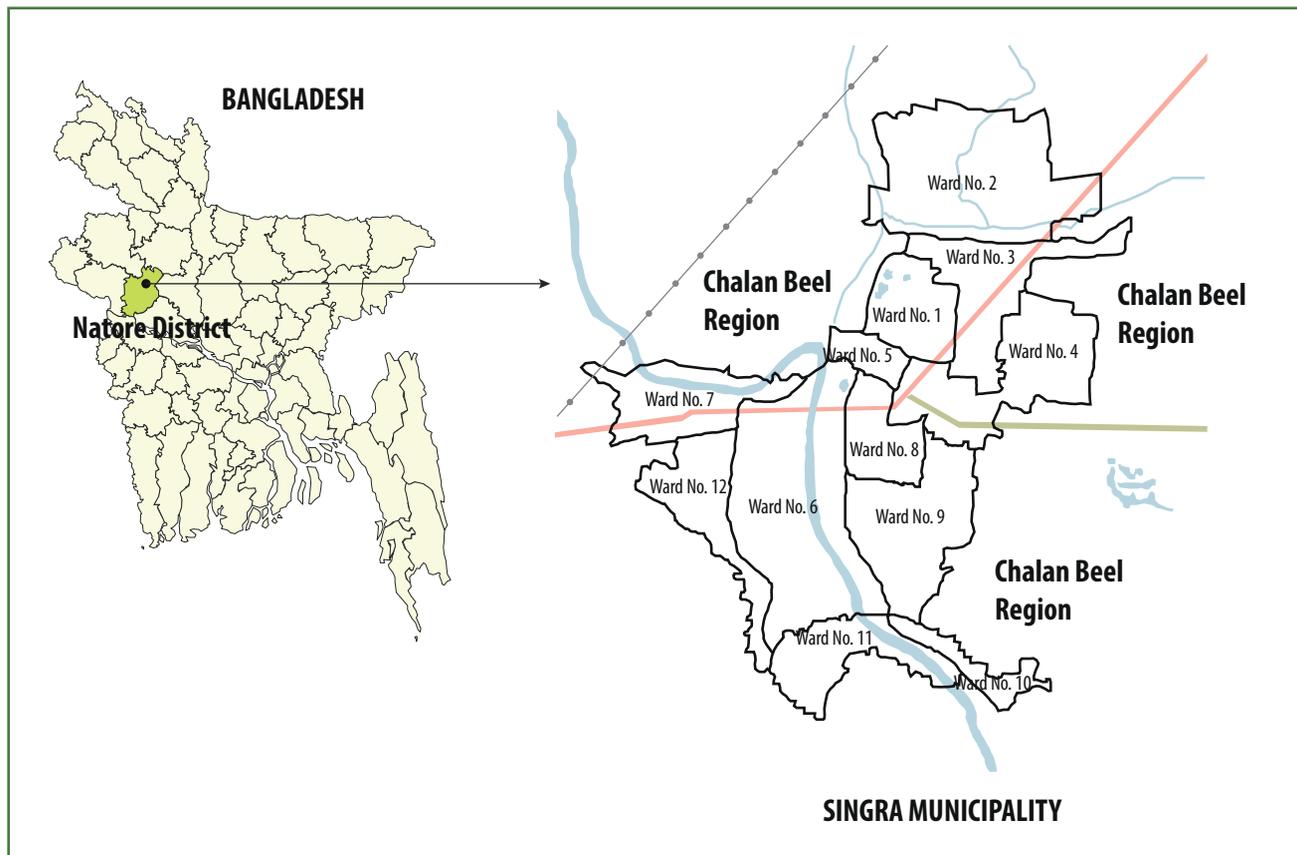


Figure 1: Location of Singra within the Chalan Beel

line with the shifting wetlands. They practice seasonal agriculture or fishing depending on the level of flooding. The region also has submersible roads that do not sustain damage in the flood waters and can be used after the water subsides.

Demographic and Socio-economic Profile

The population of Singra Municipality is 49,797 including 24,996 males and 24,801 females in 2021. Number of households is 10,484⁴. As per Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) population census in 2011, the population density was 3,034 person/sq.km. with ward 4 and 10 being the most and least populous ward respectively.

Out of the total households, there are 34% pucca (permanent settlements) houses^a, 18% semi pucca houses^b, 46% kutcha houses (temporary settlements)^c while 2% are jhupris (hutments)^d. 80% houses have sanitary toilet facilities, while 20% houses are using non-sanitary toilet facilities. Around 93.7% of people use safely managed drinking water

The municipality is surrounded by the famous moving wetland Chalan Beel. People in this region have developed a unique lifestyle in line with the shifting wetlands.

Consisting of 12 wards, Singra Municipality provides and maintains services for water supply, solid waste management, street lighting, cleaning stormwater drains, and health and family planning services.

supplied through pipes and tubewells but the rest of them depend on open tap⁵. Economy of Singra municipality is largely dependent on agriculture and its related businesses (such as rice processing), saw mills, and small retail business. A majority of the population (48.1%) is involved in agricultural activities. 25% of households are involved in small retail businesses, 3% are employed in government/autonomous organizations, 7% are employed in private organizations, and 16% are involved in informal activities. A small percentage (about 0.9%) of the working force is unemployed in Singra municipality⁶.

City Administration

Singra Municipality was constituted in 1999 and consists of 12 wards. The Municipality is responsible for all civic functions and services in the city.

At present, the Municipality consists of an elected body consisting of a mayor and 12 councillors. In addition, there are 4 reserved seats for female Councillors representing 3 wards each. The mayor and councilors together are responsible for all policy decisions. Under the provisions of Municipality (Paurashava) Act of 2009, the national government has the overall administrative and financial control. The national government can appoint the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to oversee municipal administration, including tax collection, estates maintenance, projects, among other things. However, that position is vacant at present. The Municipality provides and maintains services which include water supply, solid waste management, street lighting, cleaning stormwater drains, and health and family planning services. It also regulates, develops and maintains the infrastructure of markets, streets and other city structures.

Other than the Municipality, there are several national government agencies whose Upazila (sub-district) offices are located in Singra Municipality. The Upazila offices are responsible for implementing the national programmes and schemes in the sub-district. In Singra, they are supported by the Municipality to implement various development and planning schemes within the city. Representatives of the Upazila offices are also members of the Town Level Coordination Committee in Singra that discusses the development projects and budgets for the city. Some of these offices are:

- a) **Upazila Engineering Office, Local Government Engineering Department (LGED), Singra Upazila, Natore** – responsible for preparing the city master plan, construction of roads, culverts etc.
- b) **Office of the Assistant Engineer, Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE), Singra, Natore** – responsible for conducting surveys to find out the water contamination level like arsenic and its solution in the area.

- a. *Pucca* houses: with walls of bricks and roofs of concrete.
- b. *Semi-pucca* (semi-permanent) house: where walls are made partially of bricks, floors are cemented and roofs of corrugated iron sheets.
- c. *Kutchha* (temporary) house: made of mud brick, bamboo, sun-grass, wood and occasionally corrugated iron sheets as roofs.
- d. *Jhupri* (shacks): made of jute sticks, tree leaves, jute sacks etc.

- c) **Natore Palli Bidyut Samity - 1 (NPBS-1), Bangladesh Rural Electrification Board (BREB)** – provides electricity on the basis of their master plan to the residents and commercial establishment on priority and their capacity basis.
- d) **Upazila Agriculture Office, Singra Upazila** – provides subsidies for betterment of farmers, distributes fertilizer to the poor farmers, and often arranges training for farmers on modern techniques of cultivation.
- e) **Upazila Fisheries Office, Singra Upazila** – distributes fertilizers for fish, and sometimes carries out afforestation and distribution of saplings.
- f) **Upazila Livestock Office, Singra Upazila** – provides vaccination of poultry and other livestock.

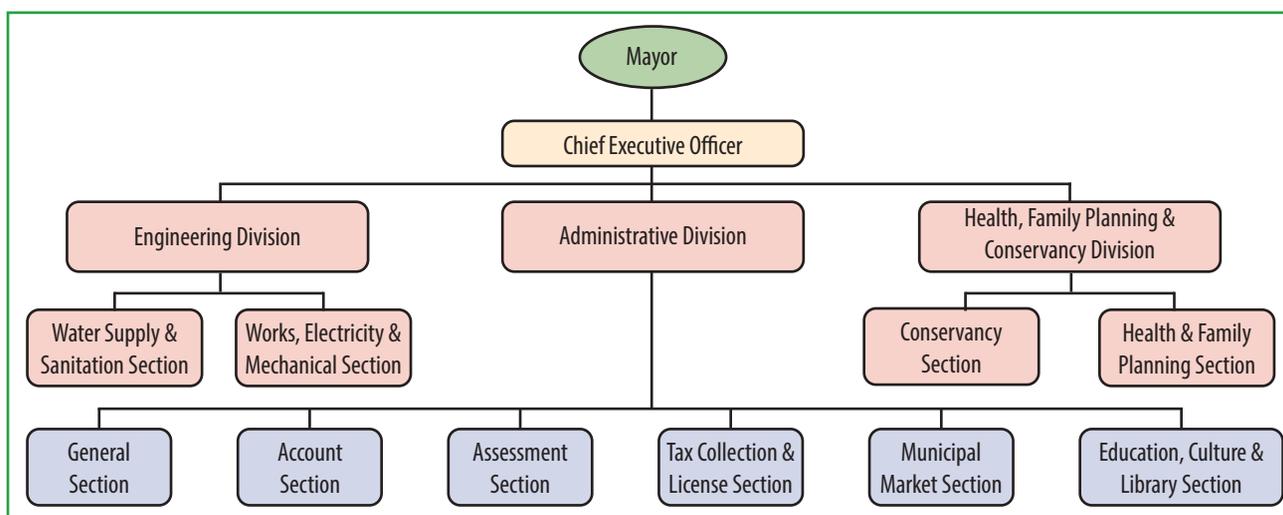


Figure 2: Organogram of the Municipality (Source: Singra Municipality, 2021)

Developmental and Environmental Challenges in Singra

Singra municipality due to its unique geographical and demographical characteristics faces several developmental and environmental challenges. These include:

Seasonal extreme weather: The municipality is located within the floodplain of Atrai and Gurnai River. Although it is located on the Barendra land which is characterised by drought prone and elevated landforms, the Singra city is relatively low lying and below flood level. Flooding in the area usually occurs due to the overflow of the rivers Atrai and Gurnai. Peripheral areas of the municipality are comparatively low lying and flood each year during the monsoon. The municipality has experienced severe flooding in 1988, 1998, 2011 and 2020. In addition, tornados and nor’westers (i.e. localized rainfall and thunderstorms with wind speeds often exceeding 100km/hr) also occur in this region. Compounding the natural occurrence of annual flooding and siltation, illegal occupation and cultivation on the riverbed is increasing the incidences of flooding in Singra in recent years.

One of the biggest social challenges in Singra is related to equity and empowerment of women. Social and cultural taboos as well as financial limitations impede women's access to higher education and skill development, ther by limiting their employability

At the same time, the municipality is increasingly witnessing irregular and unseasonal rainfall, gradually rising temperatures, and increase in incidences of drought.

Deterioration of wetlands: The Chalan Beel wetlands are rapidly changing. The swell area of the wetland has shrunk from a maximum of 368 sq kms to 78 sq km. The soil around the wetlands is showing dry cracks. This is also impacting the ichthyofaunal and avifaunal diversity in the wetland area. Studies have shown that the fish yield in the Beel has reduced significantly over the years, and many species which were once abundant, are now severely threatened. A large number of factors are responsible for this deterioration in the wetland ecosystem - urbanisation, construction and encroachment in the Beel area, siltation and pollution from industries being the major ones. Due to changes in the original shape, size and depth⁷, the capacity of Chalan Beel to store water is compromised. During the monsoons, it fails to hold the excess volume of water, consequently flooding the entire area.

Socio-economic challenges: In Singra municipality, there is a lack of education opportunity, particularly for those who live in the peripheral areas. Majority of the people are employed in the agricultural sector. But loss of income from paddy cultivation due to regular flooding has forced many people to move to the informal sector for employment as daily labour, vendors, rickshaw pullers or even as potgayak (folk singers). There are also no industries to create job opportunities and so the problem of unemployment persists. There is a lack of health facilities in Singra Municipality as well. There is only one Upazila health complex which is not sufficient to serve the varied requirements of all the inhabitants in Singra Municipality because of lack of capacity, specialised treatment facilities and low number of doctors.

Women's empowerment: One of the biggest social challenges in Singra is related to equity and empowerment of women. There is a lack of higher education facilities in Singra in general, with only one institution of higher education - the Singra Damdama Pilot High School and College. There is no university. Social and cultural taboos as well as financial limitations impede most women from travelling to other cities to access education. Therefore, women lack access to higher education and skills development. This limits their employability, and forces them to settle for lower paying jobs, if at all. In many workplaces like construction sites, women make less money than men in Singra Municipality.

Limited livelihood opportunities: As mentioned above, a large part of the population is dependent on agriculture for their livelihood. However, agriculture is a seasonal activity as large section of area is within the wetlands and therefore covered by water for the most part of the year. This sector is affected by increasing incidences of floods and droughts and this has also led to reliance on ground water for irrigation. Water for agriculture is obtained using irrigation pumps, which in turn is consistently lowering the water table, while also putting a stress on electricity availability. Recently the Municipality has started promoting solar based pumps for irrigation which has significantly reduced the stress on the power demand, but has increased the stress on the water table. There is a large population that depends on the informal employment sector, and the municipality lacks opportunities for private sector employment.

Basic urban services: Provision of basic urban services, such as water supply, sewerage management, solid waste management, public transport, parks and recreation facilities also face major challenges due to lack of trained technical staff and limited financial allocations from the national government. The Municipality relies on a small engineering department to carry out most of its functions. Trained technical manpower for planning, environment and social development is urgently required in the Municipality.

Water resources in the municipality are depleting at a rapid pace due to pollution, encroachment and indiscriminate use. The seasonal droughts create a drinking water crisis in the municipality. In many cases, even deep tube wells are not yielding enough water, causing the farmers to worry about irrigation as well as drinking water. Since this municipality is small, and largely rural in nature, there is not a lot of solid waste to manage. However, in the absence of a collection mechanism, there is significant littering which in turn creates drainage and pollution issues.

The municipality also does not have a sewerage management facility, and largely relies on septic tanks for managing faecal waste. There is recently a plan by the Municipality to initiate work on a faecal sludge management facility in the municipality, that will have major health benefits, especially considering the flood prone nature of the city. Over the recent years, there is a significant improvement in power supply in the region, and regular power cuts are not common anymore in the municipality. The municipality is also moving towards greater use of solar power, in irrigation pumps, street lighting, etc.

The medical facilities in the region is limited to the Singra Upazila Health Complex, which caters to the municipality and also nearby villages, but does not provide specialised health services.

Connectivity and COVID-19: The Singra municipality faces severe challenges with regard to access to good telecommunication networks. Although phone lines work, there is poor network coverage of broadband technology. This has had a severe impact in the coping system for the Municipality during the global pandemic of COVID-19. The economic sector suffered greatly as most people in the municipality were not engaged in economic activities that could be transferred to digital spaces (for example: agriculture and fishing). In addition, basic education and municipal services also suffered due to a lack of access to good communication networks as well as lack of basic IT skills among the staff.

In spite of these limitations, the Municipality provided support to the general public by using their public transport vehicles for door-to-door food and other essential items delivery systems, transporting COVID patients to medical facilities, and providing free food to low income population groups. The Municipality also actively promoted preventive measures of social distancing and wearing of masks, and even distributed masks to the public free of cost.

The Municipality relies on a small engineering department to carry out most of its functions. Trained technical manpower for planning, environment and social development is urgently required in the Municipality.





Voluntary Local Review in Singra Municipality



Voluntary Local Review in Singra Municipality

“Cities are where the climate battle will largely be won or lost”

– UN Secretary-General António Guterres

It has been largely recognised that 65 % of the SDGs may not be fully achieved without the involvement of urban and local actors⁸ highlighting the crucial role of local governments in the implementation of SDGs. A Voluntary Local Review (VLR) is a data driven tool that allows cities to voluntarily assess their achievement of the SDGs and their contribution to the 2030 Agenda. While the VLR holds no official status, conducting a VLR helps cities to integrate the needs of its people into the local policies.

Combining SDGs with the vision of Singra municipality provides opportunities to move toward sustainable and inclusive development. The VLR process provides a common platform to –connect not only government agencies and departments but also multiple stakeholders such as Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs), civil society, private firms and international organizations. It would not only strengthen the framework of municipal developmental planning but also would attract investors and foreign donors which would help to promote inclusive and sustainable development of the city. With this in mind, the municipality of Singra initiated the Voluntary Local Review of the SDGs, to develop a vision for sustainable development of the city. The primary objectives of the VLR process were:

- To understand how the initiatives and projects undertaken by Singra Municipality contributes towards national development goals as well as SDGs globally
- To assess the present status of sustainable municipal development by monitoring project implementation.
- To promote partnership with a wide range of stakeholders.
- To promote cooperation with the international community.

Methodology Adopted for Conducting the Voluntary Local Review in Singra

A consultative and multi-stakeholder-driven process was adopted for preparing the VLR for Singra Municipality. The process promoted collaboration within the Municipality wherein relevant departments were involved for data collection and mapping of initiatives. The process also involved interactions with a number of local actors including academia, private sector, civil society and NGOs, amongst others thereby bringing in inclusivity and ensuring that no one is left behind. However, open in-person interactions had to be limited in Singra city because of the countrywide lockdown in Bangladesh for COVID-19 and were replaced with telephonic conversations and virtual engagements. The VLR highlighted the interconnection of the environmental, social and economic development plans of the city with the national development plans as well as SDGs. It also assessed the vision of the city and its actions in the context of the SDGs and initiated their localisation in Singra. Context-

appropriate indicators for monitoring the development and implementation process were identified for future monitoring. The overall VLR process in Singra and the format of the report is derived from the Asia-Pacific Regional Guidelines on Voluntary Local Reviews by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP).

The VLR process in Singra kicked off in December, 2020 with technical support of (UNESCAP) and ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability, South Asia (ICLEI South Asia). An inception meeting chaired by the Mayor of Singra helped introduce the process for the staff of Singra Municipality and local stakeholders from the city of Singra. This was followed by engagement with the relevant departments, institutions and organisations, data collection and finally an analysis and compilation of the VLR report. The overall process adopted for conducting the VLR in Singra is depicted in the figure below.

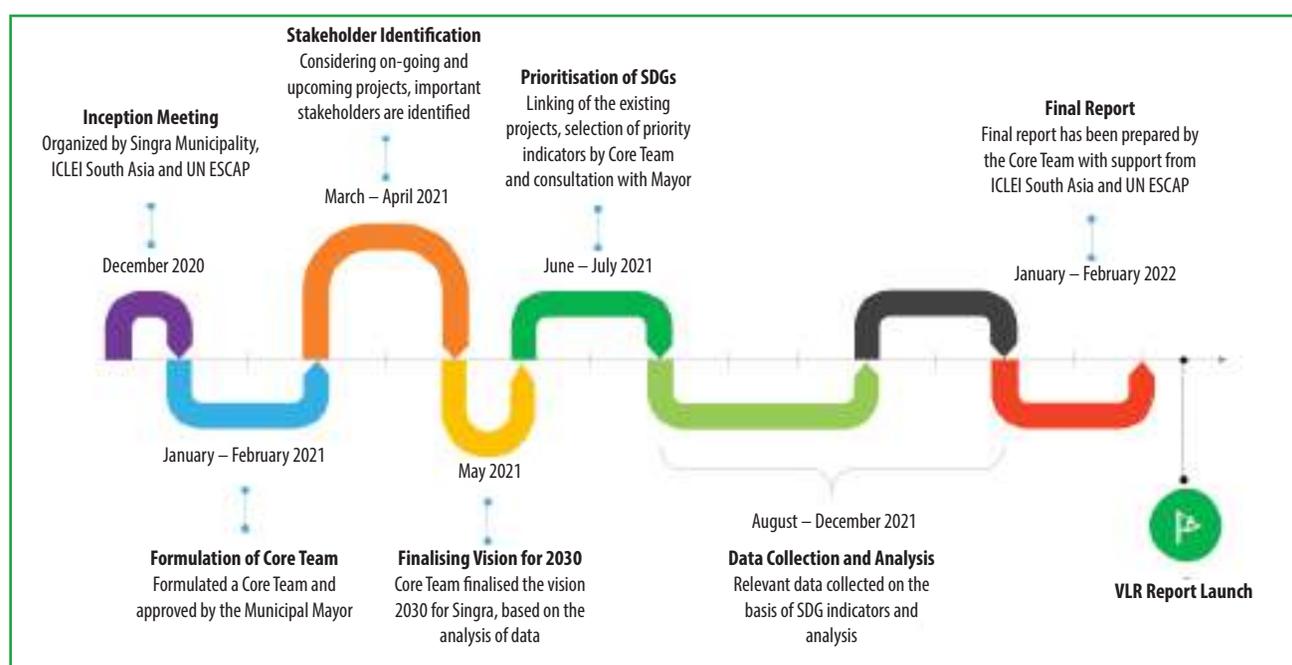


Figure 3: Overall process of conducting VLR in Singra

Inception and Institutionalisation

The Singra Municipality organised an inception workshop in December 2020 to officially launch the VLR process in Singra. The workshop was chaired by the Mayor in the presence of more than 20 officials from different departments across the Municipality. The workshop brought the key stakeholders from public, private institutions, academia and other organisations including Bangladesh Rural Development Board, Bangladesh Water Development Board, Singra Upazila Health Complex (Directorate General of Health Services), Singra Biodiversity Conservation Committee, Upazila Women Affairs Office amongst others involved in project implementation locally. UNESCAP and ICLEI South Asia, the technical partners for the Singra Municipality were also present at the meeting to introduce the overall process, work-plan and future activities under the VLR.

In this workshop, the current projects of the city were mapped in consultation with the stakeholders to identify the challenges and developmental priorities of the city.

Stakeholder Engagement

The Core Team and the Nodal Officer, in consultation with the Mayor of Singra Municipality, identified stakeholders such as the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics Office, Women Affairs office, Social Welfare Office, Department of Public Health & Engineering, Health & Family Planning Office, Water Development Board, Department of Fisheries, Bangladesh Rural Electrification Board, Upazila IT Office, Bangladesh Telecommunication Company Limited and Youth Development Office as well as non-government organisations such as Building Resources Across Communities (BRAC) and the Chalan Beel Bio-diversity Conservation Committee. The identified departments and organisations played a pivotal role in providing data for different projects and programmes being undertaken in the Singra Municipality, which is instrumental in translating SDGs into actions on ground. The Municipality either used secondary data published by these agencies or reached out to these organisations directly to collect and collate data throughout the process of developing the VLR report.

Stakeholder played a pivotal role in providing data for different projects and programmes which was instrumental in translating SDGs into actions on ground.

The Municipality Core Team had initially planned to conduct stakeholder consultations at regular intervals during the process of conducting the VLR. Unfortunately, in February the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic hit the country and a nationwide lockdown was announced in Bangladesh from 5 April 2021. This hampered effective engagement with stakeholders through normal consultation meetings. However, the Municipality maintained contact with the relevant stakeholders through one-to-one meetings and telephone conversations. This ensured that stakeholders were on the same page and generally aware of the VLR process being undertaken in the city and promoted collaboration. Stakeholders supported the Core Team by providing relevant data regarding ongoing and planned projects in the city during their meetings and consultations.

Selection and Prioritisation of SDGs for Singra Municipality

Singra Municipality assessed the ongoing and planned projects for the city to understand the development trajectory of the city and identify the SDGs that are most relevant to the city context. 26 ongoing and planned projects focusing on infrastructure development (drainage, waste, water, roads, mobility etc.), biodiversity conservation, skill development, poverty alleviation through livelihood generation were identified and linked to the SDGs that they cater to most.

Once the priority projects were listed out, the development ambitions of the Municipality became clear and it was easy to correlate the projects with the SDGs. Considering that most of the projects had a focus on infrastructure development, mobility, biodiversity conservation, climate change, poverty alleviation through livelihood generation, women empowerment, climate change, economic growth, these projects had cross cutting relations to most of the SDGs. The Core Team linked all the projects with the 17 SDGs, and the SDGs 1, 3, 5, 8, 9, 11, 13, and 15 were linked with more than one project.

In addition to this assessment, the Municipality considered the Master Plan that was developed for Singra in 2015. Although the plan is yet to be ratified by the government, it was considered during the review process to understand the overarching vision for

Singra. This vision was then discussed among the Core Team to revise the vision to one that integrated the SDGs.

On the basis of discussion with stakeholders from the municipal departments, government agencies, implementation partners and community, also taking into account the master plan, the Core Team finally identified the following SDGs as priority for the Municipality:

- Goal 5 (Gender Equality),
- Goal 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation),
- Goal 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy),
- Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth),
- Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) and
- Goal 13 (Climate Action)

For each of these SDGs, the targets and indicators were compared with the National Priority Targets (NPT) of the Bangladesh Government. The Core Team identified which indicators of the global SDG targets and the NPT list could be connected with the projects undertaken in Singra. Subsequently the Core Team identified relevant local priority indicators that are based on the above, but are contextualised to the planned or ongoing development programmes of the Singra Municipality. Targets have been set for these selected indicators by the Core Team and these would be used by the city in future to monitor their progress through localised developmental actions carried out in Singra.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection was a continuous and cross cutting phase in the VLR process for Singra. The Core Team collected relevant data from various departments and agencies. In the first phase, data was collected on the projects being undertaken including their objective, coverage, status of implementation, finances and challenges. The data collected was used to assess the status of SDGs implementation. A brief outline of the information collected is attached in Annex 1.

In the second phase, the Core Team members developed a questionnaire which would help the stakeholders provide the necessary data and information on the projects selected above so that the information can be translated to inform the selected Singra specific indicators.

During the entire data collection period, the city of Singra was in lockdown because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, it was not possible to organise in-person consultations with all stakeholders together as originally planned. However, other methods such as one to one personal meetings, interviews over phone and questionnaire-based surveys were conducted to collect relevant data. Because of the lockdown, there was a lack of means of transportation in the city. Furthermore, movement passes were required for any kind of movement in the city. Many of the local government staff were infected by COVID-19 and were not available at the duty stations. All this made it very difficult to obtain the required data and the Core Team members often had to rely on secondary sources for data.

Targets have been set for the selected indicators by the Core Team and these would be used by the city in future to monitor their progress through localised developmental actions carried out in Singra.

Voluntary Local Review (VLR) Report

Assessment of the Sustainable Development Goals in Singra, Bangladesh

The collected data was analysed to understand the existing status in the city of Singra in contributing to the achievement of the SDGs through the various developmental projects undertaken in the city. Based on this information, the city has now also identified some of the major challenges to achieving the SDGs and in carrying out future VLR studies.

UNESCAP and ICLEI South Asia provided technical support to the Singra Municipality throughout the VLR process. Regular online training and consultations were conducted with the Core Team to discuss and guide the identification of SDGs, selection of priority indicators and data collection and analysis. The city also participated in the VNR-VLR Lab in the Eighth Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development held on 16-18 March 2021, where cities who have already conducted a VLR in the past discussed about the challenges, opportunities and lessons learnt in multilevel SDG coordination and integrating VLRs with VNRs or similar initiatives. The Nodal Officer also participated in several UNESCAP led webinars on conducting VLRs which enabled him to learn about different challenges faced by his peers in developing the VLR. These events promoted cross-learning and helped the Singra Municipality to explore ways to further strengthen coordination and collaboration with various other government agencies involved in local action on sustainable development.





The City's Enabling Environment



The City's Enabling Environment

Singra Municipality has leveraged a supportive provision within the Paurashava Act to develop and implement innovative projects in partnership with different bilateral, multilateral and international organisations.

Governance and Policy Environment

The Constitution of Bangladesh provides for strong local self-governance. Article 59 of the Constitution states, 'Local government in every administrative unit of the republic shall be entrusted to bodies, composed of persons elected in accordance with law'. In addition, several legislations establish different levels of sub-national governance. These are: Hill District Local Government Parishad Act 1989; Zila Parishad Act 2000; Local Government (Municipality) Act 2009; Local Government (Union Parishad) Act 2009; Local Government (Upazila Parishad) Act 1998 and amendment in 2009; Local Government (City Corporation) Act 2009. The draft National Urban Policy, finalized in 2014, is yet to be adopted.

Singra Municipality is administered under the Local Government (Municipality) Act of 2009, also known as the Paurashava Act. According to the provisions of the act, the elected body (i.e the Mayor and the ward councillors) is responsible for overall functioning of the municipality and service delivery. In addition, the national government also has a wide range of influence in municipality's administration, including administrative and financial control. The national government appoints a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to oversee municipal administration, including tax collection, estate maintenance and projects. One of the key provisions of the Act allows municipalities to partner with any government, non-governmental organizations or private organization (within the provisions of the law) to develop and implement development projects. This provision has become critical in forging partnerships for SDG implementation at the local level. Singra Municipality has leveraged this provision to its advantage for developing and implementing innovative projects in partnership with different bilateral, multilateral and international organisations such as GIZ, ADB, BRAC and others for instance on solar streetlights, electric transportation system etc. The municipality is moving towards complete use of solar power for their street lights. It has adopted e-vehicles as their mode of public transport, using smaller e-rickshaws that can move in the smaller roads of the municipality, and even uses e-vehicles as the government ambulance service to service the areas in the municipality that are hard to reach. It also provides technical training to women and youth in an effort to enhance availability of skilled labour in the municipality.

Singra and the Natore Model of SDG Localisation

The Natore Model has been developed by the District Collector's office in Natore and identified a number of relevant targets and indicators for the Natore district. However, the model has not been prepared in consultation with the municipalities in the district. Therefore, even though the model has gained recognition at the national level, it has not been widely used by the local governments in the district. During the preparation of the VLR for Singra, through in person consultations with the officials of Natore District

Commissioner's Office and the Singra Municipality, it was observed that the Natore Model has not been adopted by Singra Municipality either, even though the model has identified means of localisation. Through this VLR process, the Municipality localized the Natore Model to identify the municipality level priorities. During the VLR consultation process, the Singra Municipality contextualised the indicators and targets that were used in the Natore Model at a district level, for the city. The municipality has also engaged with various government and non-governmental organizations to define development priorities and priority projects. However, data is not collected in a systematic manner by the municipality yet. The city has identified several indicators from the Natore Model and taken stock of the indicators to understand the current status. The shortage of staff in the municipality exacerbates the issue of maintaining a good database for future planning purposes in the city since most of the staff is busy with managing day to day responsibilities of the municipality.

Decentralised Governance in Singra

The National Government has pledged to promote decentralised governance, including fiscal decentralisation. A key aspect of the fiscal decentralisation was to formulate budgets at different levels of sub-national governments - i.e., district level, and local government levels. Although the majority of the financial resources for municipalities like Singra come from the central government, municipalities can formulate their plans for the utilisation of the intergovernmental fiscal transfers. The national government has been promoting localisation of SDGs by encouraging integration of SDGs in local plans and budgets, and by allocating funds for local governments for projects that are aligned to SDGs. Municipalities are encouraged to link their development projects to the SDGs and national priorities. The Development Project Proposal (DPP) format that municipalities use to seek funds from line ministries, in addition to their annual development budget, requires municipalities to link proposed projects with SDGs and national policies. These Development Project Proposals are government projects that are implemented with central government funding or other donor funding that comes through the central government, typically submitted annually or as funding becomes available. Currently Singra has submitted proposals for programmes on e-vehicles, embankment, capacity building, solar street lighting and sanitation, in this format with linkage to SDGs.

The Local Government Division of the Government of Bangladesh is responsible for several targets and indicators of 17 SDGs, while the local governments were identified in the 2017 VNR report to be specifically responsible for SDG 6 and SDG 11.

As mandated by the national government, the city identifies the related SDGs for its various development projects, however, there is no outcome based monitoring of the projects to understand the impact of the projects on the achievement of the SDG targets.

In Bangladesh, local governments are mandated to create a Town Level Coordination Committee or TLCC consisting of 50 members headed by the Mayor, that include elected representatives like ward councilors as well as representatives from Upazila offices, non-government organisations, civil society and private entities as members. The TLCC meets quarterly and serves to improve transparency in urban governance, since TLCC members sit in on development planning and budget discussions and support coordination of the

Through the VLR process, the Municipality contextualised the indicators and targets from the Natore Model to identify the municipality level priorities.

Municipality with other agencies. The TLCC also has strong participation of women with at least one-third of its members as women, including all women ward councilors (WWC).

In addition to the TLCC, there is a Ward Committee or WC which consists of 10 members, headed by the Ward Councilor and consisting of members from representatives of different professional groups and the poor communities. There is again a strong emphasis on including women in the Committee to ensure their participation in governance. The WC also meets quarterly and takes stock of ongoing and upcoming developmental activities specific to the ward. The ward level meetings are open to the public and provide an opportunity for the general public to take part in developmental decision making. The municipalities also have standing committees who look into separate sectoral aspects of the development and decide on the development projects and budget for their respective sectors.

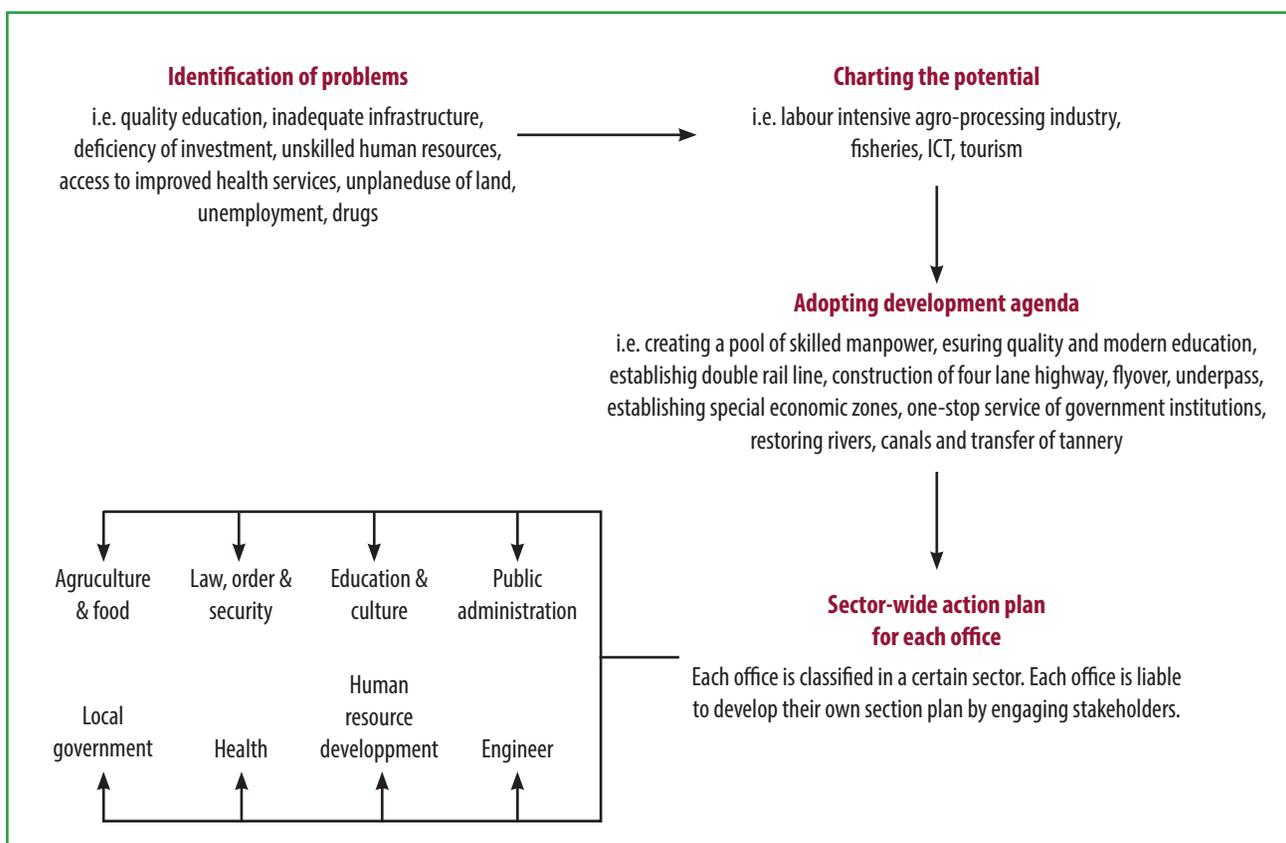


Figure 4: Schematic representation of the Natore Model

Creating Ownership of the Sustainable Development Goals and the VLRs - Reshaping the Vision for Singra Municipality

The VLR process paved the way for the city to revise and reshape its vision. The discussions within the municipality and with different stakeholders often revolved around the overall development ambition of the municipality. When the VLR process was initiated in 2020, the Singra Municipality did not have a fully developed vision for the city although the draft Singra Municipality Master Plan (2011-2031) had proposed a vision for Singra: “the creation of an urban livable environment, where people irrespective of their socio-

economic, demographic and religious identities can live and enjoy today within affordable means without sacrificing the interests of tomorrow”.

Based on this proposed vision and the developmental priorities of the city, the Core Team in collaboration with the local stakeholders, redefined the vision statement of the Singra Municipality. The overarching vision of the city is to achieve sustainable development:

Developing a planned and sustainable urban settlement, that promotes low carbon and resilient development, proactively mitigates disaster risks, provides equitable access to basic civic amenities, health services and education facilities to all, actively supports empowerment of youth and women, and encourages inclusive civic participation in governance through effective means of communication.

The Singra municipality also identified a few strategies to move towards this vision in the next five years as outlined in the figure below.

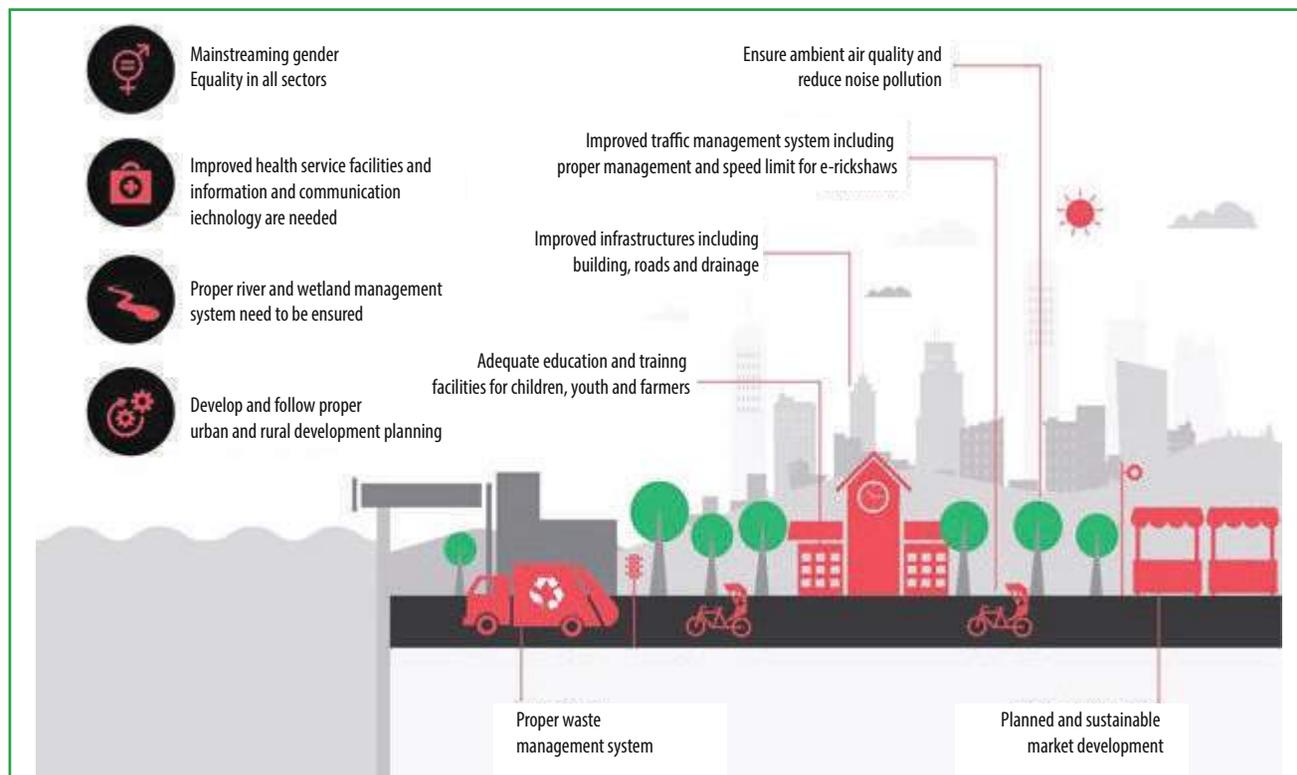


Figure 5: Singra’s strategies to move towards the city vision based on stakeholder consultations in Singra

Incorporation of the Sustainable Development Goals in Local and Regional Frameworks

The municipality of Singra has taken steps to develop projects that contribute to the achievement of the SDGs. The city does not have specific financial allocations in the municipal budget for SDGs, though there are plans for specific resource allocations in the future from the national governments for local SDG plans. However, the city has creatively applied its allocation for development projects from its regular municipal budget for achieving its SDG priorities.

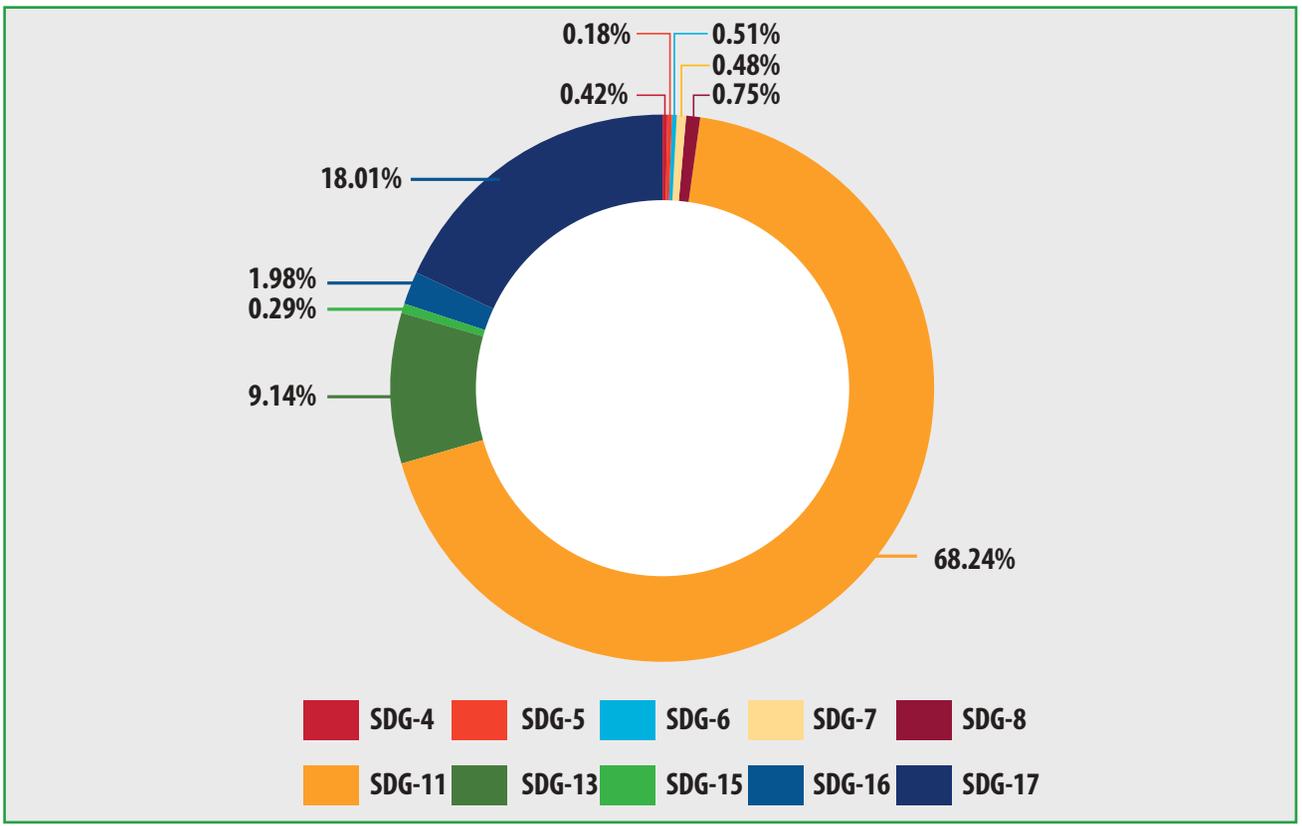


Figure 6: Municipal Budget Allocation as per the SDGs (Singra Municipality, 2021)

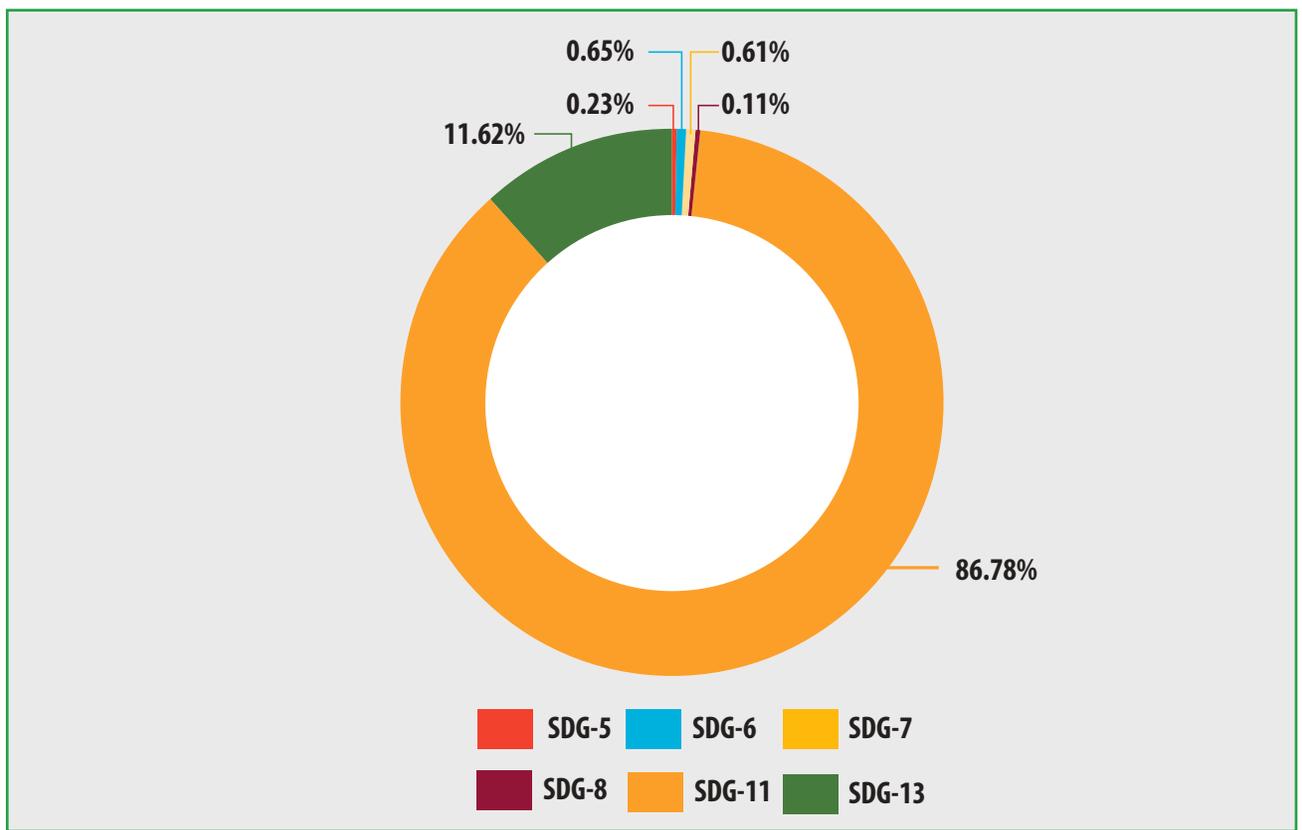
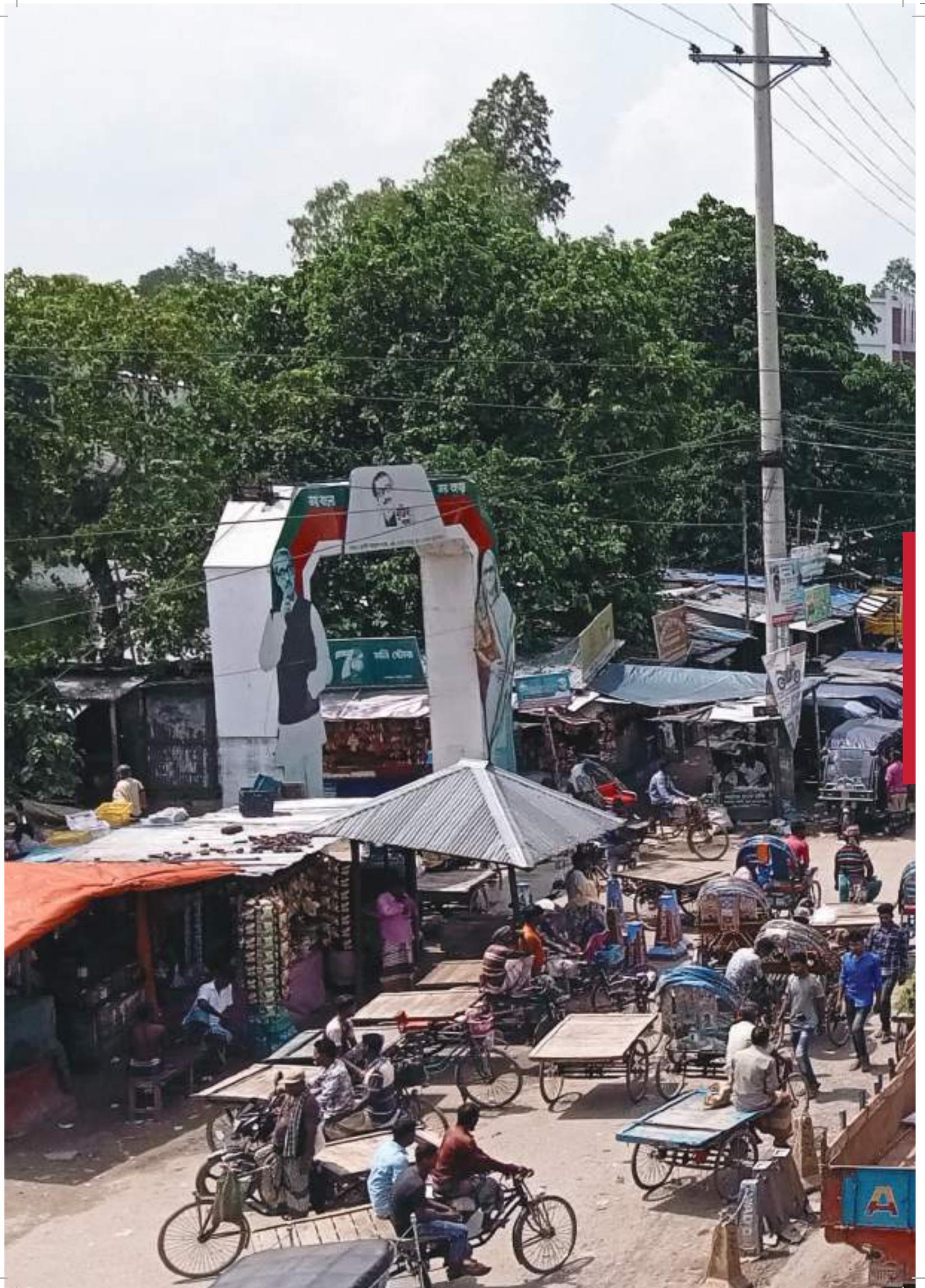


Figure 7: Percentage of municipal budget allocated to priority SDGs in Singra (Singra Municipality, 2021)

An assessment of the development projects that are currently implemented in the city by municipality and other public or private organisations shows that 11 out of the 17 SDGs are addressed through one or more projects as shown in figure below. Projects on poverty alleviation, gender development, healthcare, employment and economy, water and sanitation, road infrastructure, street lighting, environmental and biodiversity conservation, disaster management, and women and child development are ongoing in the city currently. In 2020-21, 47.56% of the total municipal budget is allocated to these sectors with the highest amount allocated to SDG 11 highlighting municipality's commitment to the SDGs. Some of the projects under this SDG include urban infrastructure development, development of Singra Municipal Canal, sustainable urban mobility for public health, wellbeing and tourism development, waste management, development of parks and widening of roads.







Leaving No One Behind



Leaving No One Behind

The development projects undertaken by the Municipality focuses on improving infrastructure and services reaching out to all, irrespective of their socio-economic, demographic and religious identities, following the 'whole of society' approach to development

Singra Municipality, following the 'whole of society' approach to development, seeks to ensure that the most marginalized and vulnerable population are not left behind. The Master Plan prepared by the Singra Municipality aims to 'leave no one behind' and promote equitable and inclusive growth and development by focusing on education, training, skill-development, infrastructure improvement, and financial programmes. The Master Plan has identified projects and programmes for improved infrastructure like transport and communication network, housing, roads, markets, bus terminals, sanitation, water supply, drainage, solid waste management, electricity, education, leisure and recreation for meeting the social and community needs of the poor and the disadvantaged groups for better quality of life.

The City Resilience Strategy for Singra was prepared in consultation with local stakeholders and identifies plausible adaptation interventions to mitigate climate risks and vulnerabilities, focusing on the vulnerable areas and the vulnerable population including women, children, fishermen, farmers and urban poor.

The Singra Municipality engages quarterly with the general public regularly through Ward Committee meetings using their WLCC. Through these meetings that are open to the public, the elected Councillors engage with the public to identify needs of the people that could then be addressed by undertaking different development activities. The outputs of these meetings then contribute to the development plans of the city that are debated in the TLCC and Standing Committees and taken up as appropriate by the Singra Municipality.

The development projects undertaken by the Municipality focuses on improving infrastructure and services reaching out to all, irrespective of their socio-economic, demographic and religious identities. The Municipality plans to construct community toilets for low-income families and slums to reduce inequalities in access to sanitation. Programmes like training, loan management and small grant arrangement promoting youth employment, facilitating easy bank loans for entrepreneurship are some measures undertaken to generate employment and encourage skill development. Similarly, training on computer outsourcing is helping to develop skills in men and women and creating opportunities for regular income. New and improved transport infrastructure will increase mobility while generating income opportunities for the poor. The Municipality has the principle of Leaving No One Behind strongly entrenched in its developmental planning and activities.



Institutional Mechanisms



Institutional Mechanisms

A number of Upazila level offices of the national government, local NGOs working on biodiversity, and individuals were consulted as the local stakeholders to execute the VLR assessment and analysis.

The municipality of Singra has developed an institutional mechanism for assessing the VLR progress in the municipality. It has designated a Core Team with members from different municipal departments to support the VLR process at the ground level with data, information and guidance. The Core Team is coordinated by the Nodal Officer, under the overall guidance of the Mayor of the municipality.

Eight officials from the Singra Municipality were appointed into the Core Team by the Mayor, to conduct the VLR process in Singra. A letter officiating the Core Team was released by the Singra Municipality. The Core Team members represented departments including administration, engineering, sanitation and public transport, which are the major technical departments of the Singra Municipality.

Table 1: VLR Core Team for Singra Municipality

Sl. No.	Designation
1	Assistant Engineer, Singra Municipality
2	Secretary, Singra Municipality
3	Administrative Officer (in charge), Singra Municipality
4	Sub-Assistant Engineer, Singra Municipality
5	Sub-Assistant Engineer, Singra Municipality
6	Supervisor, Municipal Public Transport & Ambulance Services, Singra Municipality
7	Sanitary Inspector (in charge), Singra Municipality
8	IT Officer (in charge), Singra Municipality

In addition, as mentioned above, a number of Upazila level offices of the national government, local NGOs working on biodiversity, and individuals were consulted as the local stakeholders to execute the VLR assessment and analysis. Because of the VLR process that was undertaken, the Municipality identified a Nodal Officer who engaged with the Upazila offices through meetings and personal interviews to collect relevant information regarding the city.

As mandated nationally, the Singra Municipality has established its TLCC and WCs and conducts quarterly meetings, to engage and discuss the development projects in the city and their effectiveness. Representatives from Upazila offices in Singra are also members of the TLCC and engage with the municipality for developmental planning. In addition, local NGOs and private entities are members of the TLCC. Both the TLCC and WC consist of

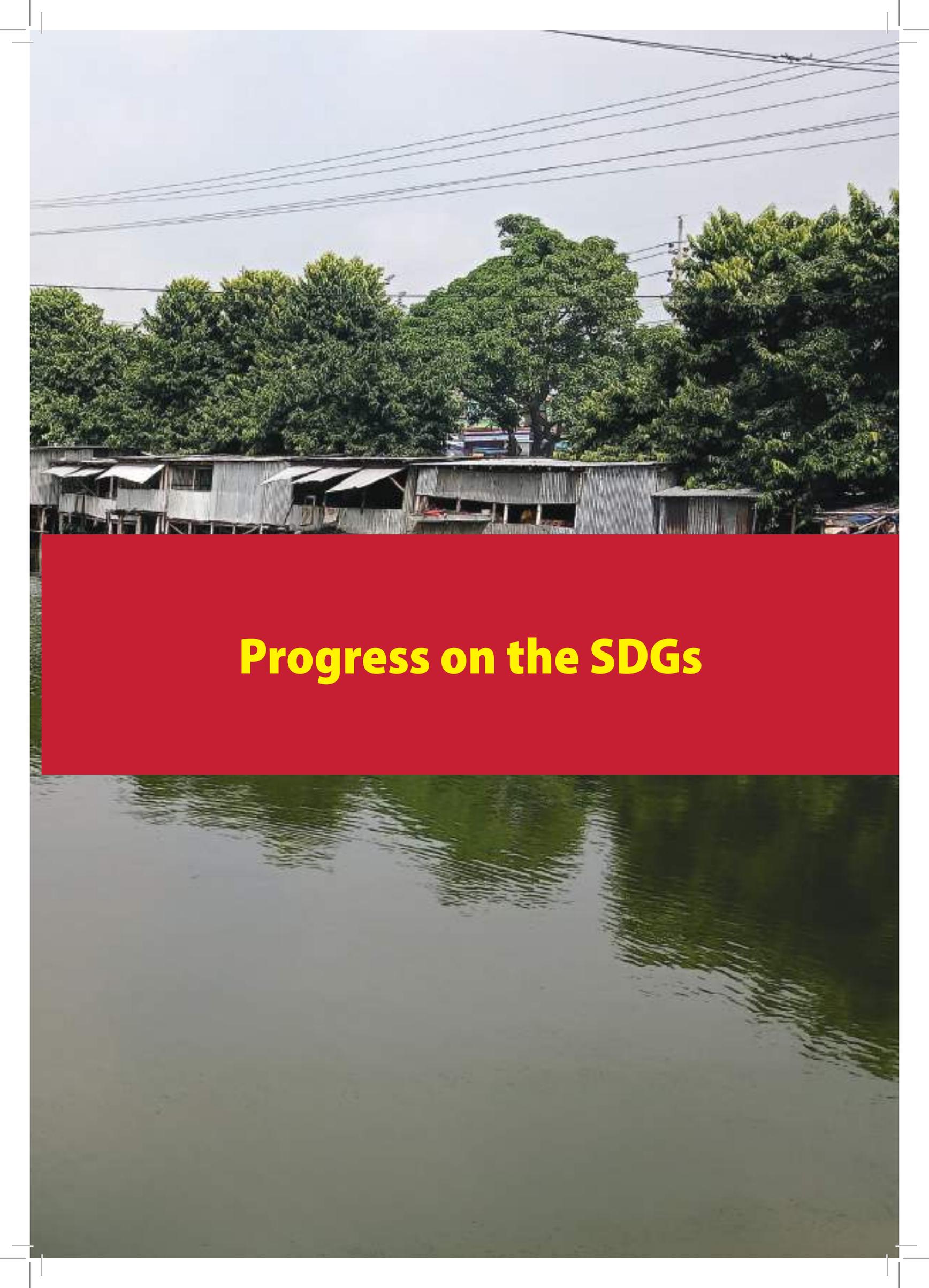
one-third women members, including women ward councilors. In addition to discussing the ongoing and upcoming development projects of the city, the TLCC and WC also discuss provision of urban services by the municipality, taxes and user charges for the municipality services, activities of the Standing Committees of the municipality, and monitoring of progress of development projects in the city. The WC meetings are open to the public and serve as a platform for citizens' engagement in planning and governance. In Singra, there are 13 different Standing Committee (SC) for revenue, audit, urban planning, citizens welfare, laws and public safety, transportation and infrastructure development, women and children affairs, fisheries, information and culture, market price monitoring, poverty reduction, health, sanitation and waste collection, and water supply. Each of these look into the regular administration of their respective portfolios.

These institutional arrangements were established to facilitate collaboration necessary within the administration. Efficient collaboration within multi-level governance settings is also required to establish localised indicators that can support the SDG monitoring at the local level. The 39+1 indicators that are used nationally to collect data and monitor SDG implementation is applicable to the local governments as well. However, in certain cases, the indicators need to be modified to suit local conditions. Collaborative discussions among stakeholders help to select local indicators that are apt for the city as a whole without biases. As various departments generally collect different types of data (including administrative data), an effort is required to merge them into an integrated database. Although an online SDG tracker is used at the national level, such a tracker is not available locally. An online monitoring system can provide much support to the municipalities like Singra for regular monitoring of their SDG achievements.

Collaborative discussions among stakeholders in Singra helped to select local indicators that are apt for the city as a whole without biases.







Progress on the SDGs

Progress on the SDGs

In order to assess the linkage of existing and ongoing development projects in Singra Municipality with the SDGs, the Core Team collected information on existing projects undertaken by different agencies in Singra. These projects were linked to the different SDGs and their relevant indicators. The following graph shows the number of projects contributing to different goals.

Six priority SDGs were selected for the city of Singra for reporting in the Voluntary Local Review by assessing them in terms of their existing status that helped to select their indicators and targets.



Figure 8: Number of ongoing projects linked to SDGs

This assessment provided an understanding of the sectoral contribution through different projects to the SDGs and helped the core team to understand the priority SDGs for the city of Singra. In addition, the draft master plan of the city and future development projects of the city were also considered to finally identify priority SDGs for the city. Based on this assessment, six priority SDGs were selected for the city of Singra for reporting in the Voluntary Local Review.

In this VLR report for Singra, the city focuses on the following priority SDGs.

- Goal 5 (Gender Equality),
- Goal 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation),

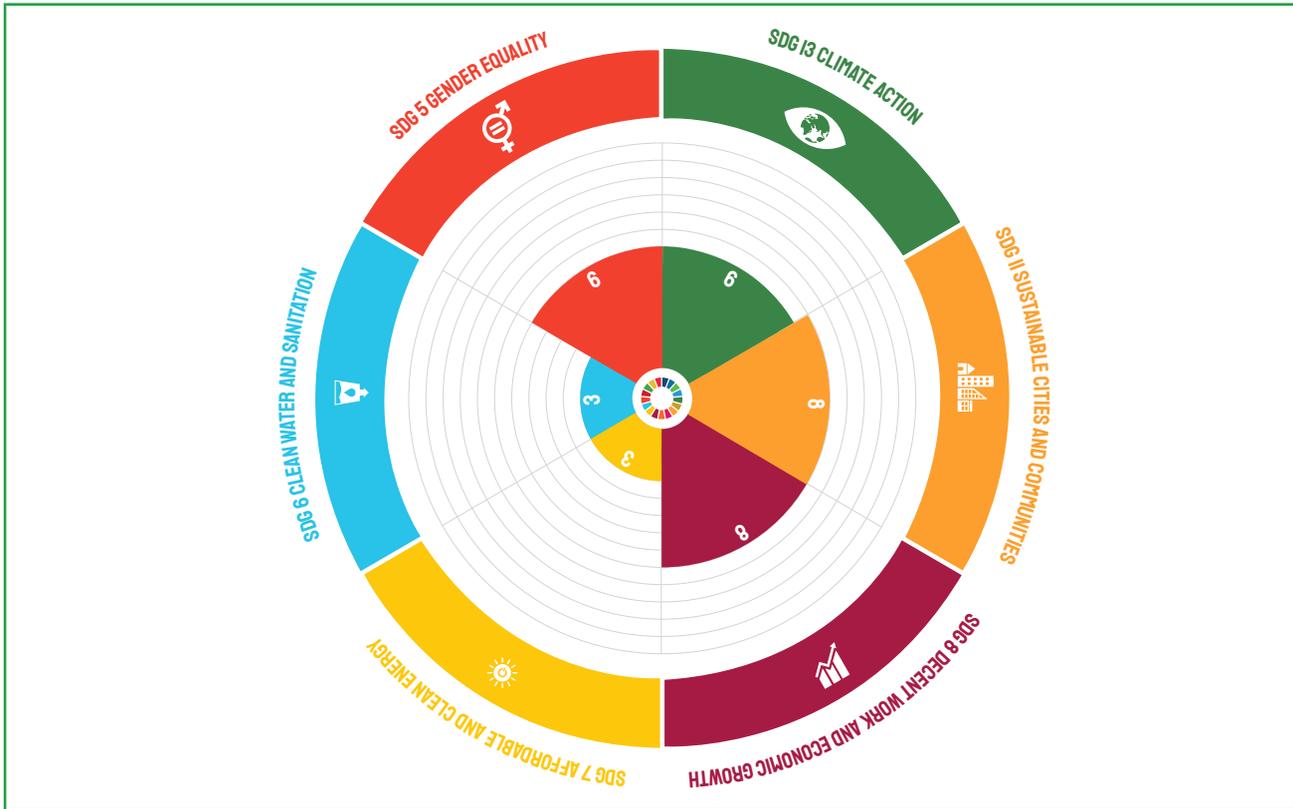


Figure 9: Number of projects in prioritized SDGs

- Goal 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy),
- Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth),
- Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) and
- Goal 13 (Climate Action)

The priority SDGs have been assessed in terms of their existing status in Singra Municipality, based on which selected targets have been identified for the different indicators of these SDGs. A detailed assessment of the priority SDGs are given in the following sections. The local targets are also aligned with the Singra Municipality Work Plan (2018-2041) from the Natore Model.

As noted in Bangladesh’s second VNR report, municipalities across the country including Singra, face a general lack of data, particularly for Goals 11 to 15. In case of limited or fragmented data, the municipality has had to use available data and identified gaps that would be addressed in future. The city plans to set up a data management cell in the municipality for collation and interpretation of collected data.

Some of the existing projects for these prioritised SDGs are outlined below:

SDG 5 : Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Five projects are being implemented in Singra which are aligned with this SDG. These projects are undertaken by the Upazila Women Affairs Office, Singra and Singra Municipality. These ongoing projects focus on technical and vocational training for women



that helps to financially empower them through small scale income generating activities. Training for sewing and computer use are provided to women under the project.

SDG 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

Six projects are being implemented in Singra that are in alignment with this SDG. The projects are handled jointly by the Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE), and Singra Municipality. The projects focus on water supply, water management, sanitation and waste disposal in the Singra Municipality, thereby addressing the equitable and universal access to drinking water, hygiene and sanitation.

SDG 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy

There are 3 projects running in Singra related to this SDG that are coordinated by Singra Municipality. The projects focus on increasing the share of renewable energy in the total energy consumption by enhancing the availability and accessibility of e-vehicles for local transport and expanding the coverage of solar street lights in the city.

SDG 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

There are eight projects in alignment with this goal and these are overseen by Upazila Youth Development Office, Bangladesh Rural Development Board (BRDB) and Singra Municipality. All these projects are closely associated with poverty alleviation and employment generation for youth through self-employment opportunities and accelerating digital economy.

SDG 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

There are eight projects being implemented in Singra that are linked to this goal. Apart from projects on increasing access to water and sanitation facilities, the city has also initiated a project on Public Transport and Ambulance Service, providing a much needed means of public transport by e-vehicles that can service the smaller interior roads of the municipality along with the main roads, ensuring an affordable and sustainable means of transport to the common people in the municipality. Besides, conservation of biodiversity, beautification of the municipality, prevention of hunting of migratory birds, tree plantation are some of the other projects undertaken and implemented by Pollishree Unnayan Sangstha (an NGO), Singra Biodiversity Conservation Committee and Singra Municipality, that are contributing to make the municipality sustainable and resilient by protecting its natural heritage.

SDG 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

Six projects are being implemented in Singra that can be related to this SDG. The major projects include construction of riverbank flood retaining wall and emergency relief during flood and other natural disasters undertaken by the Water Development Board and Singra Municipality respectively, that support strengthening of climate resilience and adaptive capacity.

SDG 5: Achieve Gender Equality and Empower All Women and Girls

Bangladesh ranked 50th out of 152 countries in the Global Gender Gap Index 2020, and became the only South Asian country to feature in the top 100. To close the gender gap, the Government of Bangladesh is allocating additional resources. The share of expenditure on women's development as a proportion of total budget increased to 29.65% in FY 2019 (5.43 per cent of GDP) from 24.65% in FY 2010.

In Singra, out of the total women in the city, as per the Census information, the percentage of girls in school is 21.44%, and the percentage of women in gainful employment is 7.07%. In Singra, very few women have rights to property or access to a bank account. Even in the case of women who are earning, financial decisions within households are taken by the male head of household.

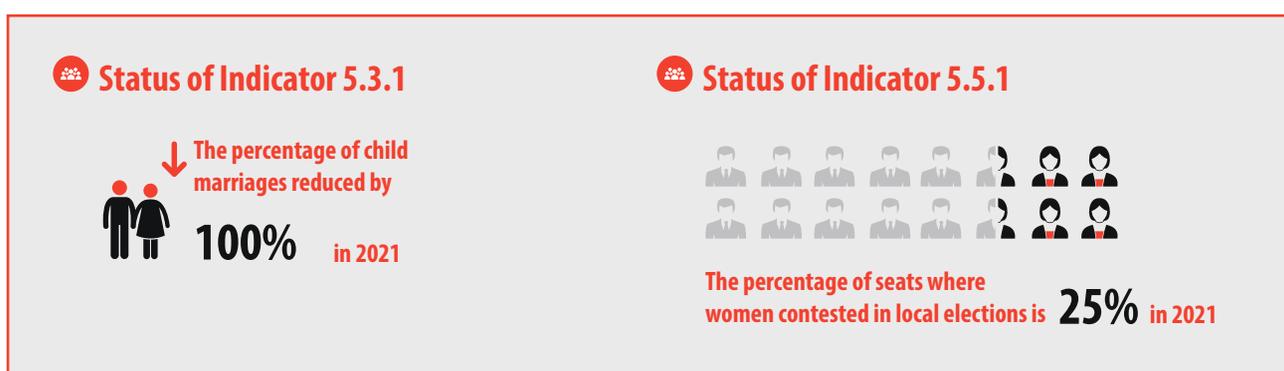
Singra Municipality is working, in line with the national government, to empower women and increase their participation in local governance and decision-making processes. 25% of the seats on the municipal council are reserved for women. The Municipality has undertaken several initiatives through policy measures like allowances for lactating mothers and training programmes on sewing, loan and grant management for women-focused activities to bring women to the centre of local development.



SDG Target	Target 5.3: Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation
SDG Indicator	Indicator 5.3.1: Proportion of women aged 20-24 years who were married or in a union before age 15 and before age 18
National Priority Targets	NPT 14: Reduce the proportion of women aged 20-24 years who were married before age 15 to zero NPT 15: Reduce the proportion of women aged 20-24 years who were married before age 18 to 10% Adopted national targets in Natore Model: Reduce the proportion of women who were married before age 18 to 30% by 2021 and to 10% by 2030
Local Priority Target	The percentage of child marriages reduced by 100% by 2021 (Natore Model)
Status	The percentage of child marriages reduced by 100% in 2021
Source	Singra Municipality, 2021



SDG Target	Target 5.5: Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life
SDG Indicator	Indicator 5.5.1: Proportion of seats held by women in (a) national parliaments and (b) local governments
National Priority Targets	Not listed in National Priority Targets Adopted national targets in Natore Model: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 18% of total seats to be contested by women by 2021 and 30% of total seats to be contested by women by 2030
Local Priority Target	The percentage of seats that women contest for in local elections increases to 75% of total seats by 2021 and 100% of total seats by 2030. (based on Natore Model)
Status	The percentage of seats where women contested in local elections is 25% in 2021 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Number of female members at the national parliament: 71 in 2018. It is to note that 1 female seat is reserved from Singra at the National Parliament. ● Number of female councillor (reserved) at Municipality: 4 ● The ratio of male:female members in the existing Municipal Council is 3:1, i.e. 25 % of councillors are women.
Source	Singra Municipality, 2021



The National Plan of Action was launched in August, 2018 by the Ministry for Women and Children Affairs to end child marriage. The goal of NPA is to lessen the rate of child marriage of girls aged below 18 years by one third in 2021, and to completely eliminate child marriage by 2041. The total number of women between the age of 10-14 in Singra is 1720, out of which 33 (about 1.92%) are reported as married as per the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics 2011. Current official information from Singra Municipality states that there are no reported cases of child marriage. However the municipality acknowledges that there might be instances of child marriage that go unreported or unnoticed. Although the national government has a target of reducing the percentage of child marriage to 30%, Singra Municipality aims to reach 0% by 2030. Legally, there is zero tolerance to child marriage in Bangladesh, but the Municipality understands that legal provisions are not enough to achieve this high target. Therefore, it is striving continuously towards this goal through community outreach and awareness programmes that inform the public about the ill-effects of child marriage.

Deference to patriarchy and other cultural attitudes continue to impede women's empowerment in Bangladesh. It curtails women's access to education and employment. In addition, there are existing disparities in labour force participation and unfair wage rates, often due to limited availability of skilled female labour. Financial independence can support women to take decisions about their life and empower them socio-economically.

Singra Municipality has prioritized skills development for women. Towards this end, it has set up a Computer Outsourcing Training Center and Sewing Training Center with the cooperation of Hon'ble State Minister for ICT. These training centres are aimed to ensure financial empowerment of women through vocational skill development. Every year 200 women were trained in sewing and about 150 young men and women were trained in information and communication (IT) relevant outsourcing services. The city targets to reach out to 5000 women by 2030. The training on computer outsourcing will help in bridging the gender divide in the digital world where women face challenges in accessing Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), which ultimately affects their educational and employment opportunities. These initiatives will improve the existing living standards of women and might also ensure fairness and considerable equity in the society through a process of social transformation.

In the last year, Singra Municipality spent USD 2,356 (BDT 200,000) on women's empowerment, maternal health and other gender related activities.





SDG 6: Ensure Availability and Sustainable Management of Water and Sanitation for All

In 2019, only about 47.9% of the population in the country had access to safely managed drinking water services, but the country has already met the target set in the 8th FY Plan of providing 80% of the population with improved sanitation facilities by 2025.

Singra Municipality is also working towards ensuring safe drinking water and sanitation for all its people. The Municipality plans to develop its own water supply network with a strong emphasis to use surface water rather than groundwater. The Municipality is also undertaking programmes to preserve and maintain all major ponds and also exploring rainwater harvesting as an alternative source of water. Programmes are ongoing to improve sanitation facilities for the poor in particular.

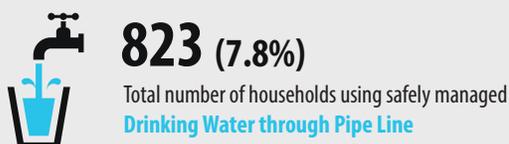
SDG Target	Target 6.1: By 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all
SDG Indicator	Indicator 6.1.1: Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services
National Priority Target	NPT 17: Ensure 100% population using safely managed drinking water services Adopted national targets in Natore Model: ● 100% by 2021
Local Priority Target	Ensure 75% of population by 2021, and 100% population by 2030, are using safely managed drinking water services (based on Natore Model)
Status	93.7% population is using safe drinking water (including piped supply and tubewells) ● Total number of households: 10,484 ● Total number of households using safely managed drinking water through pipe line: 823 (7.8%) ● Total number of households using tubewells: 9016 (85.9%) ● Total number of households using other sources of water: 645 (6.2%)
Source	Singra Municipality, 2021

SDG Target	Target 6.2: By 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations
SDG Indicator	Indicator 6.2.1: Proportion of population using (a) safely managed sanitation services and (b) a hand-washing facility with soap and water
National Priority Target	NPT 18: Ensure 100% population using safely managed sanitation services Adopted national targets in Natore Model: 98% by 2021 and 100% by 2030
Local Priority Target	Ensure 100% by 2021 population using safely managed sanitation services (Natore Model)
Status	The percentages of population using safely managed sanitation services 80% in 2021
Source	Singra Municipality, 2021

SDG Target	Target 6.b: Support and strengthen the participation of local communities in improving water and sanitation management
SDG Indicator	Indicator 6.b.1: Proportion of local administrative units with established and operational policies and procedures for participation of local communities in water and sanitation management
National Priority Target	Not listed in National Priority Targets
Local Priority Target	Each ward to organise at least 4 ward meetings annually to discuss water and sanitation management. Drainage network: 20.62 km by 2026
Status	48 ward committee meetings were organised in 2019-2020 and 12 ward committee meetings were organised in 2020-2021. Existing drainage network: 11.24 km
Source	Singra Municipality, 2021

💧 Status of Indicator 6.1.1

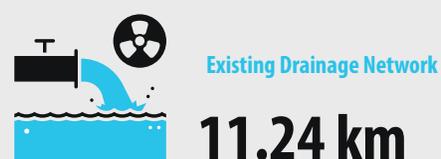
93.7% population is using safe drinking water (including piped supply and tubewells)



💧 Status of Indicator 6.2.1



💧 Status of Indicator 6.b.1



The municipality follows the Municipal Act - 2009 to implement all the development projects related to water supply, drainage and sewerage, waste management, roads and commercial infrastructure related to municipal environmental infrastructure in the interest of municipal citizens. In addition the city performs following activities on regular basis:

- Organizing public awareness through ward meetings in different wards to avoid open defecation
- Promoting the habit of washing hands with soap after using the toilet.

Providing sanitary latrines as per the demand of citizens and installing tubewells for potable water supply at household level.

Access to clean drinking water is a precondition for good health. Currently more than 85% of the population access water through tube wells and only 7.8% households are connected with piped water supply. About 6.2% of the population uses other sources of water that are not treated or from safe tubewells.

Discussions with local residents reveal that households are willing to pay for piped water connection if supply and quality is assured. With the increase in population, there has been an increase in demand for water supply and the Singra Municipality is exploring alternative sources of water like rain water harvesting. To access funds for this, Singra Municipality is negotiating with the Department of Public Health and Engineering (DPHE) to set up an overhead tank and install a piped water network to serve 100% of the residents with access to safe drinking water. Singra Municipality has already submitted a Development Project Proforma (DPP) to the DPHE focusing on construction and augmentation of water pipelines, tubewells, solar based water pumps, and overhead tanks for approval and further actions.

According to BBS 2011, the sanitation system of Singra municipality comprises 37.9% sanitary toilets with water seal, 40% sanitary toilets with no water seal, 17.8% non-sanitary toilets while the remaining 4.2% have no toilet facilities. Current information from Singra Municipality states that 80% of the population uses safely managed sanitation services. Considering the high costs involved for establishing a sewerage network and treatment plant, Singra municipality aims to set up low cost sanitary latrines in the town along with generating awareness for sanitary behaviour. It is proposed to set up public toilets in areas like bus stands, bazaars (markets) and the main town center. There is a plan to construct 15 community toilets with separate access for men and women and 150 ring slab toilets for low income families and slums thereby reducing the inequalities in services following the principle of leaving no one behind. Singra Municipality has also proposed a faecal sludge treatment plant in the next three years.

In the previous year, the Singra Municipality spent about USD 6,714 (BDT 570,000) on water and sanitation. Evidently, there is a need to leverage domestic and public finance for building the water supply and sanitation infrastructure in the city. Reforms can also help to promote the performance of existing services, increase cost recovery and financial security, and attract private investment thereby increasing the coverage and meeting the targets of the Goal 6.

Box 1: Preventing Migratory Bird Hunting and Protect Biodiversity Losses in Singra

Every year in winter, flocks of migratory birds arrive from the colder regions in Himalayas and Siberia to make this country's waterholes, such as Natore's Chalan Beel, their temporary home. In Singra in the Chalan Beel, wild bird hunters poach various birds including Kadakhocha (mud sniper), Rat Chora, Crane, Shalik and many migratory birds using traps and nets, particularly right after the monsoon when winter sets in. The Beel is becoming a danger to wild birds because of these practices.

Migratory birds are hunted to provide game birds to high end restaurants in the big cities as well as sold as pets in local markets. The price of each bird species varied over time. Winter is the preferred season because of high demand for migratory ducks. Live doves are in high demand as pets in local markets or among local people.

Different hunting techniques are used to hunt birds. Trapping is the most preferred method, followed by netting and poisonous bait. In most trapping cases, hunters use locally made bamboo or wooden cages to catch live birds. Mist nets or fishing nets were mostly set up during the night in the wetlands and targeted to hunt migratory ducks and waders. Poisonous chemicals or pesticides were mixed with cereals or put inside small fishes to hunt ducks, herons or egrets and passerines. This overhunting impacts a serious reduction of species and wildlife in Chalan Beel area.

Poor implementation of the existing Wildlife Preservation Act properly is one of the main reasons of over hunting of migratory birds. There is also a need to increase public awareness in the upazila or district levels to reduce demand and discourage hunting. In the Singra municipal area, a voluntary local conservation group named "Chalan Beel Biodiversity Safety Committee" works for awareness creation. The group also conducts sudden inspections along with the Upazila administrative officials in the Beel to stop bird hunting and to release birds that are caught by the hunters. However, there is a need to increase the manpower, equipment and fund for frequent inspection to protect migratory bird hunting. As per Mr. Hasan Imam, Co-chair of the Chalan Beel Biodiversity Safety Committee "If we prevent the migratory bird hunting from Chalan Beel, Singra will become famous for natural beauty".

Hunting of birds is proven to interfere with the hibernation and migration of the birds while also affects the entire biosphere. If the Chalan Beel Biodiversity Safety Committee continues to work to protect migratory birds, then one day Chalan Beel will get back to its natural beauty again.





SDG 7: Ensure Access to Affordable, Reliable, Sustainable and Modern Energy for All

Bangladesh has already achieved coverage of 95% households with access to electricity in 2019. The SDGs Action Plan by the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resource emphasizes reliable and modern energy, increase in the share of renewable energy in total energy, and improving energy efficiency and financial incentives for improved cooking stoves in the country.

At the local level, Singra Municipality is striving hard to enhance access of all citizens to electricity. Also, the Municipality is working towards increasing the share of renewables thereby also contributing towards climate actions.

SDG Target	Target 7.1: By 2030 ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services
SDG Indicator	Indicator 7.1.1: Proportion of population with access to electricity
National Priority Target	NPT 19: Ensure access to electricity for 100% population
Local Priority Target	100% electricity coverage by 2030
Status	Percentage of electricity connection: 95%
Source	Singra Municipality, 2021

SDG Target	Target 7.2: By 2030, increase substantially the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix
SDG Indicator	Indicator 7.2.1: Renewable energy share in the total final energy consumption
National Priority Target	NPT 20: Increase renewable energy share in total final energy consumption to 10% Adopted national targets in Natore Model : Ensure using solar street light 10% by 2021 and 20% by 2030
Local Priority Target	Increase the percentage of renewable energy share in total energy consumption to 20% by 2030. Ensure 400 new solar street lights installed by 2021 and 1000 solar street lights by 2030.
Status	Renewable energy share in the total energy 0.82% (2018), 1.57% (2019), 1.90% (2020) Current number of solar street lights: 621
Source	Bangladesh Rural Electrification Board and Singra Municipality

📊 Status of Indicator 7.1.1

 **95%**
Percentage of **Electricity Connection**

📊 Status of Indicator 7.2.1

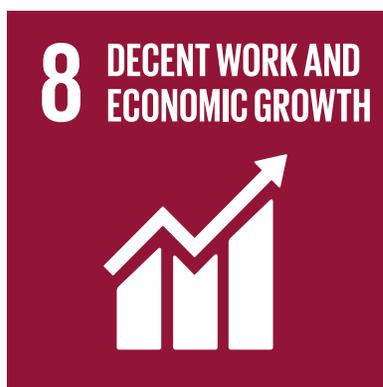
 **Renewable energy** share in the total energy
0.82% (2018), 1.57% (2019), 1.90% (2020)

621 Number of **Solar Street** Light installed in 2021

Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) is mainly responsible for electricity supply in the Municipality, supported by the Bangladesh Rural Electrification Board (BREB). Singra has been successful in ensuring access to 95% of its population to electricity and is well on track to achieve the target of 100% coverage by 2030.

Singra has also undertaken three projects with the objective of increasing the share of renewable energy in the total energy consumption by enhancing the availability and accessibility of e-vehicles for local transport and expanding the coverage of solar street lights in the city. Solar PV systems at the household level are also promoted by the Municipality. Even five years ago, all roads in Singra municipality were void of street lights, except on a few major roads. There were only 255 electric street lights in the municipal area. Paying special attention to public safety, the mayor of Singra Municipality planned to install adequate street lights on all roads. On the Natore-Bogra highway, LED streetlights were installed from Ningin bus stand to Baluabasua, which illuminated the road as well as beautified the city. Later, on the recommendation of the Honourable State Minister for ICT, funds were allocated by Bangladesh Climate Change Trust for installation of solar street lights in Singra Municipality, with which 621 solar street lights were installed in Singra. This has not only enhanced safety and security for citizens, the installation of solar street lights has been awarded nationally and Singra municipality has gained international reputation. The city has spent USD 6,243 (BDT 530,000) on energy and power supply, street lighting, and renewable energy in the previous financial year. However, there is no monitoring system in place to assess the progress of the Municipality.





SDG 8: Promote Sustained, Inclusive and Sustainable Economic Growth, Full and Productive Employment and Decent Work for All

Bangladesh has made major progress towards SDG 8. The country has already achieved above 8 % of average annual GDP growth rate which coupled with reduced population growth has led to increased GDP growth per capita.

Singra Municipality is working towards promoting sustained economic growth through multiple projects focusing on engaging youth, employment generation and accelerating the digital economy. Singra is providing training to youth, providing loans and grants for youth entrepreneurship, providing training on sewing for women among others. This is aimed at promoting inclusive growth and decent work for all men and women thereby contributing towards the social dimension of SDG 8.

SDG Target	Target 8.3: Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services
SDG Indicator	Indicator 8.3.1: Proportion of informal employment in total employment, by sector and sex
National Priority Target	Not listed in National Priority Targets
Local Priority Target	Percentage of population in informal employment is 10% by 2030.
Status	Percentage of population in informal employment: 16%
Source	Singra Municipality, 2021

SDG Target	SDG Target 8.5: By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value
SDG Indicator	Indicator 8.5.2: Unemployment rate, by sex, age and persons with disabilities
National Priority Target	NPT 22: Reduce unemployment rate to below 3%
Local Priority Target	Reduce unemployment rate to 0.5% by 2030
Status	Unemployment rate in 2021: 0.9%
Source	Singra Municipality, 2021

SDG Target	Target 8.6: By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training
SDG Indicator	Indicator 8.6.1: Proportion of youth (aged 15-24 years) not in education, employment or training
National Priority Target	NPT 23: Reduce the proportion of youth population (15-22 years) not in education, employment or training to 10%
Local Priority Target	Reduce the proportion of youth population (15-24 years) not in education, employment or training to 10% by 2030
Status	Total youth population aged 15-24: 6407 Population aged 15-24, not attending school – Male:1,668, Female: 2,318 Not attending school from the youth population: 62.21%
Source	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), 2011

SDG Target	Target 8.7: Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms
SDG Indicator	Indicator 8.7.1: Proportion and number of children aged 5-17 years engaged in child labour, by sex and age
National Priority Target	Not listed in National Priority Targets
Local Priority Target	Reduce the percentage of child labour to 2% by 2030.
Status	Percentage of Child labour: 6.07% Total population of children between 10-14 years: 3572 The number of children aged 10-14 years engaged in child labor are 217 (Male:137, Female: 80). They are employed by different field like agriculture 47 (Male: 43, Female: 04), Industry 08 (Male: 08, Female: 0), Household work (Male: 03, Female: 45) and Service 114 (Male: 83, Female: 31)
Source	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), 2011

SDG Target	Target 8.10: Strengthen the capacity of domestic financial institutions to encourage and expand access to banking, insurance and financial services for all
SDG Indicator	Indicator 8.10.1: (a) Number of commercial bank branches per 100,000 adults and (b) number of automated teller machines (ATMs) per 100,000 adults
National Priority Target	Not listed in National Priority Targets
Local Priority Target	Increase the number of commercial banks to 12 by 2030.
Status	Number of commercial bank: 7 - Janata Bank Ltd., Rupali Bank Ltd., Rajshahi Krishi Unnayan Bank Ltd., Agrani Bank, Bank Asia, Islami Bank, BRAC Bank Number of ATMs: 5 - Dutch Bangla Bank (3), Islami Bank Ltd (1), Janata Bank Ltd. (1)
Source	Singra Municipality

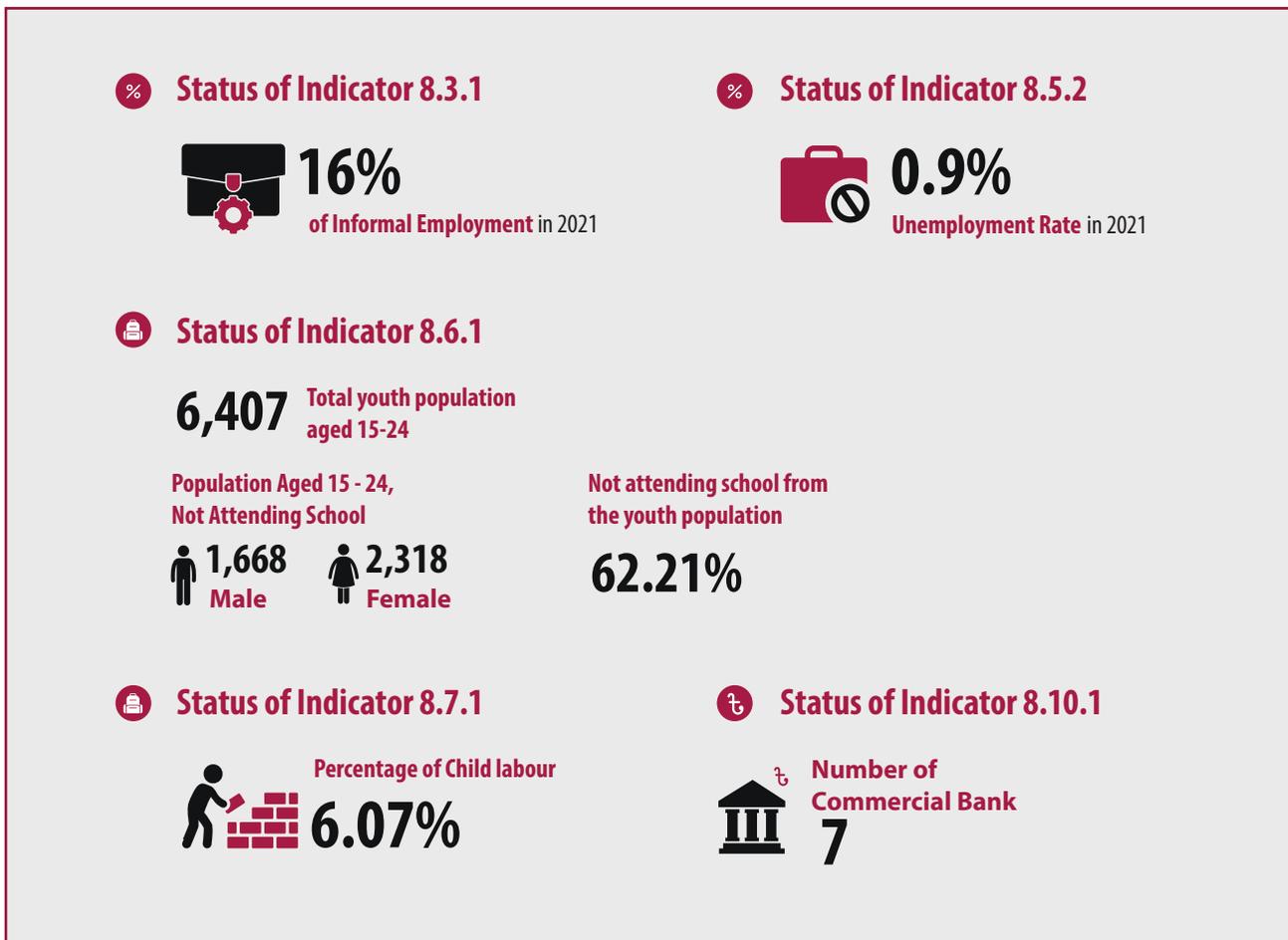
A large proportion of people in the labor force - about 16% - is engaged in the informal sector in Singra. More than 60% of youth are not engaged in education, but there is no available information whether such youth is engaged in employment or training. Child labour remains high at 6.07% in Singra Municipality violating children's rights. Financial inclusion enables people to make day-to-day transactions, maintain and protect their own savings, plan and act for regular expenses, invest in small business or microenterprises, alleviate shocks, and boost up economic growth. The city plans to bring in investment that can provide local employment to at least 5000 young men and women by 2025.

In Singra municipality, there are 7 different commercial banks and 5 ATMs, which is significantly lower than the global average of 42 per 100,000 persons, but almost the same as the national average of 9. Singra municipality is communicating with the commercial banks to set up more ATMs in this city.

Engagement in formal entrepreneurship is essential to both the local economy and the character of our neighborhoods, providing opportunities for individuals to strengthen

their own economic security and employ members of their communities. The Municipality supports businesses as they start, operate, and grow by providing free services at scale and investing in innovative projects for entrepreneurs that create long-term change in the city. Singra municipality is taking initiatives like micro financial support with the help of local NGOs, providing training to informal labour to become entrepreneurs. Better vocational and technical education and training can reduce occupational immobility and increase labor market flexibility. Singra municipality is helping young people to develop their skills with the help of the Upazila Youth Development Office. This includes providing them with leadership training, mentoring, and helping them to overcome the challenges they may experience in their daily lives.

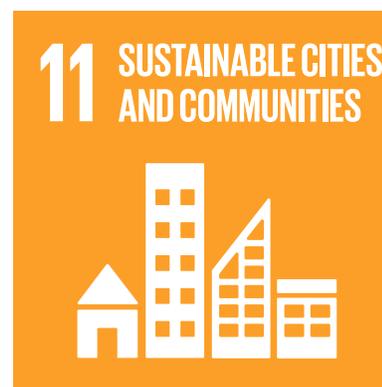
The municipality has spent USD 9778 (830000 BDT) for activities under the SDG 8 in the previous financial year.



SDG 11: Make Cities and Human Settlements Inclusive, Safe, Resilient and Sustainable

The Government of Bangladesh has already put in place well-defined national policies to reduce urban poverty and improve living conditions through better governance and service improvements including waste management, urban transport and disaster management. The country has also made a significant effort to reduce its disaster vulnerability, specially building coastal resilience through long term investments.

Singra Municipality is committed to developing infrastructure and policies to ensure access to basic services like piped water supply, sanitation, sustainable solid waste management and improved public transport to all. The Municipality has developed a Master Plan (2011-2031) which focuses on structure plan, land use plan (transportation & traffic management plan, drainage & environmental management plan) and also includes ward action plan. Also, Singra has taken a forward step and developed a City Resilience Strategy (CRS) in 2017 to be able to withstand and adapt to climate-induced disasters.



SDG Target	Target 11.1: By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums
SDG Indicator	Indicator 11.1.1: Proportion of urban population living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing
National Priority Target	Not listed in National Priority Targets
Local Priority Target	Improvement of housing, water and sanitation facilities in 2 slums by 2030
Status	Improvement of housing, water and sanitation not completed in any slum in 2021. Number of slums: 7 Number of households (HH) in slums: 540 Total population in slums: 1,797 Percentage of population living in slums: 3.60%
Source	Singra Municipality, 2021

SDG Target	Target 11.2: By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons
SDG Indicator	Indicator 11.2.1: Proportion of population that has convenient access to public transport, by sex, age and persons with disabilities
National Priority Target	NPT 30: Ensure women, children, elderly and persons with disabilities have convenient access to public transport (minimum 20 % seats)
Local Priority Target	Reduce the number of informal e-rickshaws (battery operated paddle pulled rickshaw) to 100 by 2030. Instal 3 solar e-vehicle charging stations by 2030
Status	Number of informal e-rickshaws (battery operated paddle pulled rickshaw) - 569 Number of solar e-vehicle charging station : 01
Source	Singra Municipality, 2021

Voluntary Local Review (VLR) Report

Assessment of the Sustainable Development Goals in Singra, Bangladesh

SDG Target	Target 11.3: By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries
SDG Indicator	Indicator 11.3.2: Proportion of cities with a direct participation structure of civil society in urban planning and management that operate regularly and democratically
National Priority Target	Not listed in National Priority Targets
Local Priority Target	Develop an inclusive and participatory urban development planning process by 2025
Status	<p>Urban development planning in Singra city follows a participatory and inclusive process through meetings with different level of committees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Town Level Coordination Committee (TLCC) ● Ward Level Coordination Committee (WC) ● Standing Committee (SC) <p>The TLCC and WC are open to the public, but the SC are not open to the public.</p> <p>Number total meetings held in each year: 108</p>
Source	Singra Municipality, 2021

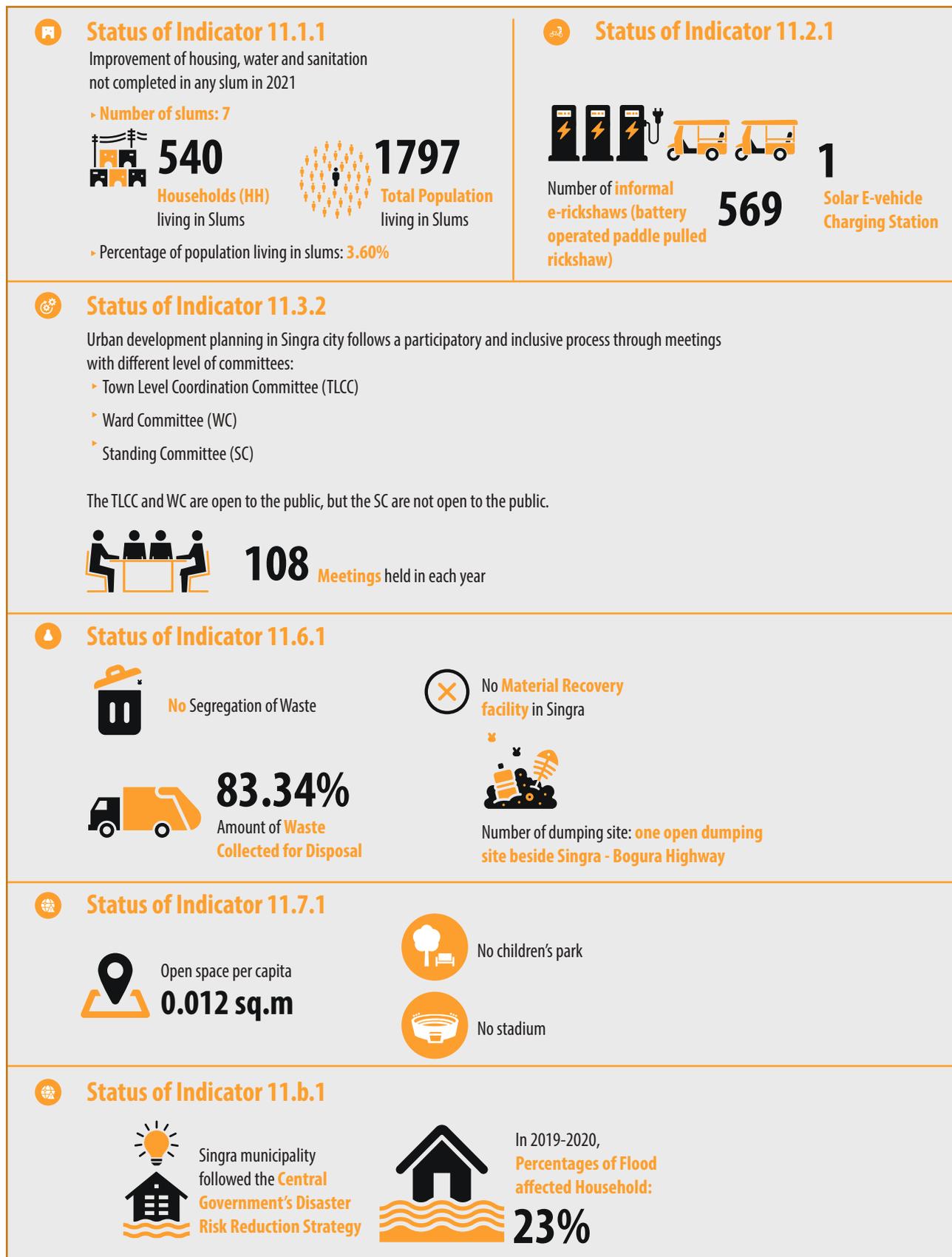
SDG Target	Target 11.6: By 2030, reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality and municipal and other waste management
SDG Indicator	Indicator 11.6.1: Proportion of municipal solid waste collected and managed in controlled facilities out of total municipal waste generated, by cities
National Priority Target	Not listed in National Priority Target
Local Priority Target	<p>To achieve segregation of waste in 80% households by 2025</p> <p>To achieve collection of waste from 95% households by 2022</p> <p>To develop a material recovery facility and a sanitary landfill facility by 2025</p>
Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No segregation of waste ● Amount of waste collected for disposal: 83.34% ● No Material recovery facility in Singra ● Number of dumping site: one open dumping site beside Singra - Bogura highway
Source	Singra Municipality, 2021



SDG Target	Target 11.7: By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities
SDG Indicator	Indicator 11.7.1: By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities
National Priority Target	Not listed in National Priority Targets
Local Priority Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increase the area of open space to 10 sq m per capita ● Develop 1 children's park and 1 stadium by 2030
Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Open space per capita: 0.012 sq.m. ● No children's park ● No stadium
Source	Singra Municipality Draft Master Plan and Interim Report of Master Plan

SDG Target	Target 11.b: By 2020, substantially increase the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters, and develop and implement, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, holistic disaster risk management at all levels
SDG Indicator	Indicator 11.b.1: Number of countries that adopt and implement national disaster risk reduction strategies in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030
National Priority Target	Not listed in National Priority Targets
Local Priority Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop a Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy for Singra Municipality by 2023 ● Reduce the population impacted by disasters by 10% by 2025
Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Singra municipality followed the Central Government's Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy. ● In 2019-2020, Percentages of Flood affected household: 23%
Source	Singra Municipality, 2021





Making cities sustainable involves investment in a variety of aspects such as safe and affordable housing, building resilient economies, sustainable and affordable public transport, creating green public spaces, sustainable urban services, and in general improving urban planning in participatory and inclusive ways.

In Singra municipality, there are seven slums in the city area, with 540 households housing 1,797 people. It is planned to upgrade at least two of the slums in the city by 2025 and provide basic services to all. To improve the living conditions of slums, the quality of housing needs to be improved. The Singra municipality has taken a special initiative to improve the living standards in slums by improving the water supply and sanitation facilities and giving technical support for income generating activities.

In order to promote inclusive development, the city organises regular public meetings through the Town Level Coordination Committee (TLCC), Ward Committee (WC) and Standing Committee (SC). Every year, there are around 108 meetings to make various decisions ensuring people's participation.

The municipality of Singra is still largely rural in nature with many small roads throughout the city where bigger vehicles cannot ply. To promote accessibility, e-rickshaws and vehicles are being promoted in the city that can move in smaller lanes as well. The city has developed operational guidelines to monitor and manage the e-vehicles in the city and has planned to develop solar power recharging stations for the vehicles. Singra municipality has received "National Urban Resilience Award" in 2018 and 2019 for undertaking resilience initiatives such as promoting e-rickshaws as public transport. The other initiatives linked to improving infrastructure and addressing impact of climate change such as solar street lights, carbon-free pollution-free advanced electric cars, electric ambulances, etc. have been specially praised. Currently the public transport managed by Singra Municipality consists of 10 e-rickshaws and 2 e-ambulances. In addition, there are 870 privately managed vehicles consisting of 110 e-rickshaws, 200 CNG driven three wheelers, 1 paddle pulled rickshaw and 569 informal e-rickshaw (battery operated paddle pulled rickshaw). The entire population of Singra Municipality are beneficiaries of the public transport system.

The total solid waste generation per day in Singra is 6 MT and the amount of solid waste disposed per day is 5 MT. However, there is no proper disposal or treatment system in the city. It is vital to develop a waste recovery facility for the city at its earliest. The city also lacks open public spaces and needs to urgently develop public parks for the citizens.

The Municipality plans to develop a disaster management plan for the city by 2022 and undertake massive plantation activities in the city to increase flood resilience.

The municipality has spent 892873 USD (75800000 BDT) in its municipal budget for activities under SDG 11 in the previous year. A substantial amount of the municipal budget is spent on SDG 11 related activities.



Box 2: Electric Mobility Initiative in Singra

In Singra, there is no public transit system and manual rickshaws (tricycle) are commonly used by residents for short distances. However, recently, some rickshaw owners have illegally converted the manual rickshaws to battery operated ones, using old and discarded batteries of e-rickshaws. This is leading to illegal consumption of electricity and has also led to accidents due to failure to control the speed. It became an emerging issue in Singra to operate these vehicles in a systematic way that can support public transport system in a safe and sustainable manner.

In this context, the municipality has taken up a unique initiative of promoting e-Rickshaws as public transport and emergency health transport system at a minimum cost in an organized and systematic way.

Singra Municipality participated in the Transformative Urban Mobility (TUMI) Challenge in 2018 and was selected as a Winning City among 130 cities around the world. Through this challenge, Singra proposed a pilot project for using electric mobility in public transport addressing both SDG target 11.2 as well as National Priority Target 30 that call for inclusive and safe public transport. The project aimed at establishing a sustainable, inclusive transportation system that reduces air pollution, uses energy efficiently and addresses climate change and public health. Singra is the first city in Bangladesh to offer city-owned and operated public transport services for their citizens, which was a success right from the beginning.

Through this project, Singra introduced 10 modernized e-rickshaws (Cholo) as public transport and two e-ambulance for health emergency support. The project also constructed an e-vehicle garage cum battery recharging station and established a 24-hours call center service. To ensure road safety, drivers were provided training. Singra has also developed local operational guidelines for use of electric vehicles as public transport.

The major challenge in the project was the lack of availability of good quality e-vehicles, batteries and lack of knowledge of safe driving among the drivers. Managing the local e-rickshaw and drivers association to promote the environmentally friendly e-vehicle in Singra municipality is also a big task for the municipality. To address this, Singra municipality is going to establish a local lithium-ion battery workshop for e-rickshaws and install roof top solar along with net metering system at re-charging station. Training of drivers is an integral part of the initiative as well.

The "Cholo" Public Transport service has become very popular in Singra as a safe, affordable and sustainable mode of transport. The 24 Hour Free Ambulance Service project ensures public emergency health care and played a significant role during the COVID-19 lockdown period. During the lockdown, door-to-door food aid was delivered using these vehicles through just one phone call to the service centre number, which was much appreciated by the residents. Around 20 people are employed in this service that is particularly useful for reaching out to the elderly, women, disabled-persons and low income groups of people because of its affordability.

In order to reach the economics of scale and make this venture a source of revenue for the city, Singra municipality is trying to scale up the number of vehicles for public transportation.

SDG 13: Take Urgent Action to Combat Climate Change and its Impacts

The Goal 13 is aimed at integrating climate change measures, disaster risk measures and sustainable natural resource management into national development strategies for building a low-carbon and climate-resilient sustainable future. Without the achievement of SDG 13, the achievement of all other SDGs will be undermined as climate change poses risks to the achievability of goals relating to material and physical well-being such as prosperity and welfare, poverty eradication and employment, food, energy and water availability and health while also impacting justice and equality across the world.



As one of the most climate-vulnerable countries in the world, Bangladesh has taken several steps to reduce the climate risks. The GoB has signed the Paris Climate Agreement along with other global commitments and agendas. The country is integrating environmental, climate change and disaster risk reduction considerations into overall project design, budgetary allocations and implementation process.

Singra Municipality has adopted a bottom-up approach for adapting to and mitigating climate risks. The Municipality has developed a City Resilience Strategy where potential climate risks were analysed to identify fragile urban systems. The city has identified and undertaken infrastructure projects like riverbank flood retaining wall and emergency relief during flood and other natural disasters for strengthening of climate resilience and adaptive capacity.

SDG Target	Target 13.2: Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning
SDG Indicator	Indicator 13.2.1 : Number of countries with nationally determined contributions, long-term strategies, national adaptation plans and adaptation communications, as reported to the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
National Priority Target	Not listed in National Priority Targets
Local Priority Target	Develop and review climate action plans at 2 years interval
Status	City Resilience Strategy for Singra, developed in 2017 Singra Municipality is the signatory member of Global Covenant of Mayors (GCoM) for Climate & Energy. Under this membership mandate, Singra reports on their local level climate actions.
Source	Singra Municipality, 2021



Status of Indicator 11.3.2.1



Singra Municipality has prepared **City Resilience Strategy** in 2017



Singra Municipality is the signatory member of Global Covenant of Mayors (GCoM) for **Climate & Energy**. Under this membership mandate Singra reports on their local level climate actions.





Means of Implementation



Means of Implementation

VLR assessment process has also contributed to the drafting of the development plan, as it has helped the municipality to assess the current status of SDG implementation and identify some of the critical sectors that still need improvement to achieve the local SDG targets.

Singra does not have any urban development policy. A draft master plan was developed in 2015 by the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED), which is the agency of the Government of Bangladesh to provide technical support to rural and urban local governments. The draft master plan, however, has not been accepted by the municipality or approved by the national government. At present, the municipality of Singra is drafting a comprehensive development plan through a participatory process that could ensure both political and people's acceptance. The development plan will help the city to align its future programmes and projects to both local and national priorities.

The VLR assessment process has also contributed to the drafting of the development plan, as it has helped the municipality to assess the current status of SDG implementation and identify some of the critical sectors that still need improvement to achieve the local SDG targets.

Policy and Development Planning

In Singra, the VLR process has revealed that the development programmes are not aligned with the priorities identified through the Natore Model for SDG localisation or the national policies. Annual development projects are selected through multiple consultation meetings with TLCC, WC and SC members, but the annual development budget is prepared based on the availability of funds from the line ministries. This often results in a mismatch between projects selected through participatory mechanisms, and the projects that are funded. The annual budget does not reflect long term ambitions for the city. To overcome this planning issue, Singra needs to adopt integrated development planning in order to have an overall framework for socio-economic and spatial development, along with resource allocations. The city aims to develop the integrated development plans through participatory and consultative processes that will engage local stakeholders, including general public, as well as national and international development partners.

As an immediate step, the Vision for the city that was finalised through the VLR process can be combined with the existing resilience strategy and draft master plan of the city to create an overall development plan for the city.

Financial Resources

The city of Singra has limited financial resources to be able to implement sustainable development activities. The primary sources of revenue for the city are from internal revenue (holding tax, water bill, trade license, markets, etc) and yearly allocation for the central government. In recent years, financing from some development partners has also increased to some extent.

The total annual budget for the year 2020-21 is about 2.7 million USD. Financial resources from different sources need to be aligned with the municipal development trends and its long-term plans.

To achieve this, municipality should have information about the intergovernmental fiscal transfers and allocations for different programmes and projects that are implemented within its spatial boundaries. The TLCC which includes representatives from the Upazila offices in the city, can provide this information to the municipality in their regular quarterly meetings.

Further, integrated planning and budgeting needs to be adopted to coordinate and align priorities from the Ward Committees (bottom-up priorities) with fiscal allocations. Where, gaps are identified municipality could raise resources from different institutions, including government and private sector, for priority initiatives. Fiscal investments from alternative sources, including private sector, could help the municipality to fund SDG related activities.

Technical Capacities

One of the major hurdles in the achievement of SDG targets in the city is the lack of trained municipal staff with relevant capacities for sustainable urban development. The municipality has only 2 engineering staff and no planners currently. With such limited staff, technical staff are involved in the day-to-day management of municipal responsibilities, rather than strategic development planning. The staffing gaps within the municipality, sometimes resulting from political interventions in hiring of staff, is also one of the main reasons for limited mainstreaming of sustainability, social inclusion and climate resilience in the municipalities programmes and projects.

Till the municipality can address its human resources gaps, the municipality should look at other options of building partnerships with local NGOs and civil society organisations who can support the sustainable development of the city.

Data

Data collection and management is a major challenge for Singra. Since the local SDG indicators are often shared responsibility of different government agencies, the municipality had to collect data from different agencies to be able to collate its first VLR report. In the process, the city has realised that disaggregated data needs to be maintained in a structured manner to be able to develop VLR reports in future. The city has also identified the need to work together with different national and sub-district government departments who can provide data for monitoring its priority indicators. This is essential to avoid duplication of data collection. The SDG tracker at the national level already collects information from the city, district and national agencies, however, this data is at a national level, and does not reflect local priorities. The Singra Municipality can utilise the data that is being collected at the Upazila and district level as evident from the assessment of the Natore Model of SDG localisation. This information should, however, be supplemented with information at the ground level from the different local departments of the Municipality as well as from other agencies working in the city. In case of certain local indicators and targets that have been set through the VLR process, the city would need to set up a system of collection of data and updating information.

Technology and Innovation

During the COVID – 19 lockdown, Singra municipality had realised the importance of web-based systems for operational purposes. Internet connectivity in the city is poor, although it is improving slowly. The city has already taken up IT related training of youth and women to address the lack of technical capacity among its residents to utilise information technology to its fullest potential.

The city aims to digitise its data management system and governance processes. At present, e-filing has begun as a national mandate in all public departments. The Municipality aims to use digital processes for providing e-services to its citizens.

COVID -19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a serious challenge in conducting the VLR assessment in Singra. A series of consultations with key stakeholders were planned in Singra, but due to COVID, only one face to face meeting was possible. Remaining discussions were mostly virtual or individual interviews. Undertaking VLR regularly in the city will help the city to identify data gaps and build partnerships, which would in the long run support resilience of the city in case of future shocks such as the COVID – 19.

The COVID -19 pandemic has impacted the development activities in the city as well. Financial allocations had to be shifted to managing public health at the city level. In addition, the lockdown slowed down some of the development activities by restricting movement.





The Way Forward



The Way Forward

A large amount of the waste is organic in Singra, and can be used as compost in the agricultural fields in and around the city. Segregated collection of waste and facilities for recycling could help minimise dumping of waste.

Undertaking the development of the VLR report and the extensive review and assessment that it entailed, has helped the city to identify a number of gaps that need to be addressed to not only achieve the SDG targets, but also to generally improve the governance system in the city. The city is implementing several development projects and also plans to implement more for improving the living conditions of the citizens through slum development programmes, sanitation improvement, embankment development to increase flood resilience, solar lighting systems, e-mobility, waste processing and disposal systems and so on.

From the VLR assessment, it is clear that the municipality should financially invest in basic services in the city such as water and sanitation facilities, solid waste management and sustainable transport systems. Renewable energy and disaster risk resilience are other vital sectors where significant investment is needed. For sanitation and solid waste, the city needs to build processing and treatment facilities and safe disposal systems. Singra already plans to extend sanitation coverage in the city by 20% through DPHE's support in wards 6, 7, 10, 11 and 12 that lack proper sanitary facilities. The city also plans to establish public toilets, a designated waste disposal site, and a biogas plant under the same support. Private partnerships for treatment and disposal of solid and liquid waste could bridge the technical gap in the municipality. A large amount of the waste is organic in Singra, and can be used as compost in the agricultural fields in and around the city. Segregated collection of waste and facilities for recycling could help minimise dumping of waste.

To increase the share of renewable energy, Singra will install 379 additional solar street lights to reach the expected target of 1,000 by 2030. Energy auditing could help in evaluating the performance of solar street lights and the overall difference in electricity consumption vis-a-vis the national grid. For this, Singra Municipality needs technical support from the Bangladesh Rural Electrification Board. There is a need to build institutional capacities at the local level in Singra to be able to undertake energy auditing, pilot programmes on renewables and knowledge generation to promote energy transformation with the support of development partners. The Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) and the Bangladesh Rural Electrification Board would play a crucial role in this arena.

Collaboration with bilateral and multilateral agencies for financial and technical support is important and the city aims to engage with national and international development partners to develop integrated plans.

Planning cell for SDG review and implementation: To achieve the targets addressed through the VLR report, Singra needs to establish a SDG cell within the municipality. Given the lack of technical capacity among municipal staff, the city plans to partner with an

NGO for better management of the Cell. However, the city would still support the cell to monitor the progress of SDGs by providing data and supporting the coordination with other agencies. Responsibilities of this cell would be to review the progress of SDG implementation through regular monitoring of localised indicators developed during the VLR process and prepare future VLR reports. It will also be responsible for coordinating and collecting information time to time from external agencies that are implementing SDG relevant programmes in Singra.

When the VLR assessment process was begun in Singra, the Municipality had no information about the Natore Model on SDGs and its planned actions. The VLR process has provided comprehensive information on local SDG targets and planned actions highlighted in the Natore Model to the city officials. The city now plans to use the priority areas identified through the Natore Model to inform its future development programmes. The SDG Cell can also collaborate with technical experts to carry out training programmes on SDGs at regular intervals to keep the political and administrative officials abreast of the development in the achievement of the SDGs.

Gender inclusion: Building the capacity of women to participate in political decision making can play a big role in ensuring gender equity in the long run. The lack of active participation of women in politics despite the quota system could be due to the traditionally accepted role of women at home, but there is also a factor of lack of education and capability to articulate political opinions in public that discourages women from participating in politics and ascertaining their rights. Larger number of women in political roles will create greater discourse on women friendly and inclusive urban development and encourage the Singra Municipality to take steps in that direction, thereby contributing to achievement of not just SDG 5 goals, but also others that are related to inclusive development.

Although Singra Municipality has been progressing towards women's empowerment, there is still a lot of scope to improve. There is a need to bring in a gender perspective into all policies, programmes, administrative and financial activities and in organisational procedures, thereby contributing to an institutional transformation. Political parties should nominate more women candidates even for seats that are not reserved for women. The Municipality needs to adopt strategies to remove cultural and institutional barriers to promote women's participation in local politics as well as access to education and income generating opportunities.

As an immediate action, Singra will work together with the Upazila Women Affairs Office, primarily responsible for child marriage protection and gender violence in Singra Upazila, so that the existing ward- wise child marriage protection committee can function properly. In the long term, Singra Municipality plans to devise ways to collect sex-disaggregated data in order to provide a robust evidence base for policy formulation and programming.

Information Management System: There is a need to set up a strong information management system within the municipality. This system should help to collect sector wise data, track development progress, and compile evidence. The national SDG tracker portal collates information from various national ministries and cities are responsible for submitting information on SDG 11 that is collated and presented to the portal by national

The SDG Cell in the city collaborate with technical experts to carry out training programmes on SDGs at regular intervals to keep the political and administrative officials abreast of the development in the achievement of the SDGs.

Through the VLR process, the Singra Municipality has successfully developed a sustainable development related vision for the city, identified locally contextualised priority SDGs, their targets and their indicators, and assessed their progress towards achieving the local targets.

ministries. However, for the VLR, the Municipality aims to collect data and report on a number of prioritised SDGs, which can be easily managed with an online data repository. The previously proposed SDG Cell can help to collect data and report on this online system.

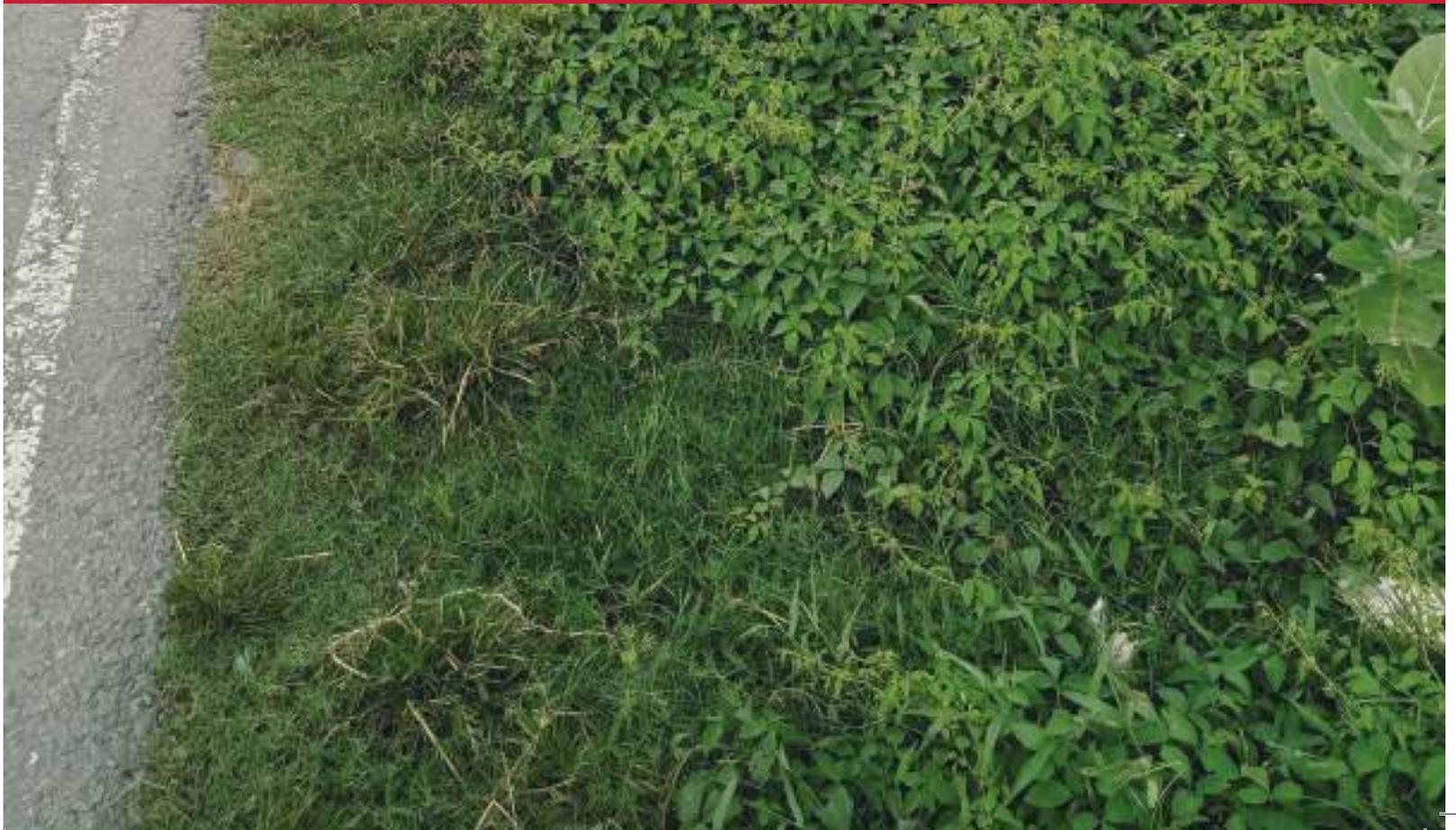
SDG informed Integrated Development Planning and Budgeting: The VLR process has helped the Municipality to identify a development related vision for the city. However, to achieve this vision, the Municipality needs to develop a long term strategic plan. The strategic plan can be made in an inclusive and collaborative manner so that it takes into account the needs of the people while also guiding the city towards a sustainable and resilient future. This can be done by engaging with the general public through Ward Committees and Town Level Coordination Committees to identify ground level needs and interacting with local stakeholders, NGOs, and other institutions to understand larger developmental needs. The Municipality should explore opportunities of partnering with private agencies for technical and financial assistance to not only assess baseline information about development programmes, but also design and develop implementation plans and monitoring strategies.

Lack of funds in the Municipality hampers sustainable development activities in the city. Singra needs to develop a sustainable financing strategy to secure funds in the development sector. The strategy should include a business model for public-private partnership, increasing municipal revenue, sector wise investments and expenditure plans. This will ensure that in the long run the municipality will be able to address existing gaps and challenges in terms of both financial and technical capacities. Collaboration with bilateral and multilateral agencies can support the municipality to finance projects on sustainable development.

Through the VLR process, the Singra Municipality has successfully developed a sustainable development related vision for the city, identified locally contextualised priority SDGs, their targets and their indicators, and assessed their progress towards achieving the local targets. In the process, the city also understood the importance of a strong data management system and good governance processes that can support the city to become a sustainable and liveable place in future.



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Annexure 1: Implemented Projects of Singra



Annexure 1: Implemented Projects of Singra

List of Ongoing Projects in Singra

Name of on-going project	Sector	Name of Project according to master plan	Name of planned/upcoming project	Link with SDGs (if mentioned during the workshop)	Contact details (phone, email etc.)
Town Protecting Embankment Project	Disaster Management			Goal 9 and 13	Shamim Hossain, Sub Assistant Engineer, BWDB, Natore, 01718993126
Construction of Retaining wall on the left bank of Atrai and Nagar River	Disaster Management			Goal 9 and 13	Shamim Hossain, Sub Assistant Engineer, BWDB, Natore, 01718993126
Important Urban Infrastructure Development Project (UIDP)	1. Construction of Drains. 2. Construction of Roads		Construction of Manhole and Piped Drain	Goal 9, 11	
Urban Infrastructure Development Project (UIDP)	1. Construction of Drains. 2. Construction of Roads			Goal 9, 11	Nurul Islam Khan, Assistant Engineer +8801724-949698, ni.khan1977@gmail.com
Local Government Services Project-LGSP	1. Household Waste Management 2. Construction of Roads 3. Construction of Drains			Goal 9, 11, 13	Shahidul Islam, Conservancy Inspector +8801713-703381
Installation of Solar Street Lights in Singra Municipality Area	Infrastructure Development, Renewable Energy		100% solar street lighting coverage by 2022	Goal 7 and 13	Nurul Islam Khan, Assistant Engineer +8801724-949698, ni.khan1977@gmail.com
Promoting E-Rickshaws as a Public Transport and Emergency Health Supporting Services	Electric Mobility and Public Health			Goal 3 and 7	Binayak Kumar Chakraborty Administrative Officer +8801714-383829, binayak00@gmail.com
Free Training on Sewing for Women	Self-Employment and Digital Economy			Goal 5, 8, 1	Binayak Kumar Chakraborty, Administrative Officer +8801714-383829, binayak00@gmail.com
Free Training on Computer Outsourcing??	Self-Employment and Digital Economy			Goal 5, 8	Binayak Kumar Chakraborty, Administrative Officer +8801714-383829, binayak00@gmail.com
Regeneration and Beautification of Singra Municipal Canal ¹ under Annual Development Program	Beautification, Open Space and Biodiversity Conservation		Renovation of 1 km canal side roads by 2022	Goal 9, 11, 14	Nurul Islam Khan, Assistant Engineer +8801724-949698, ni.khan1977@gmail.com
Training, Loan Management and Small Grant Arrangement for Youth Employment	Poverty Alleviation and Youth Employment and Gender Equi			Goal 1, 8	Md. Rafiqul Islam, Upazila Youth Development Officer +8801716-925800, uydorafuulislam@gmail.com
Total Digitization of Health Services from Registration to Service and Future Follow up	Health Services		Establishment of a full fledged Diabetes, Eye and Dental Hospital	Goal 3	Dr. Aminul Islam Upazila Health & Family Planning Officer +8801712-502380, singra@uhfpo.dghs.gov.bd

Name of on-going project	Sector	Name of Project according to master plan	Name of planned/upcoming project	Link with SDGs (if mentioned during the workshop)	Contact details (phone, email etc.)
Tele-Medicine Service	Health Services			Goal 3	Dr. Aminul Islam Upazila Health & Family Planning Officer +8801712-502380, singra@uhfpo.dghs.gov.bd
Rural Vision Centre	Health Services		Improvement of 100 Bed Hospital from existing 50 Bed	Goal 3	Dr. Aminul Islam Upazila Health & Family Planning Officer +8801712-502380, singra@uhfpo.dghs.gov.bd
Free Covid Vaccination Program	Health Services		Vaccination of 100% Children under EPI Coverage	Goal 3	Dr. Aminul Islam Upazila Health & Family Planning Officer +8801712-502380, singra@uhfpo.dghs.gov.bd
Integrated Poverty Alleviation Program (somonnito daridro bimochon kormosuchi)	Poverty Alleviation			Goal 1	Imrul Hasan Rural Development Officer, Singra +8801911-761276, urdobrdb@gmail.com
Women's Development Division Program (Mahila Unnayan Onu bivag kormosuchi)	Poverty Alleviation and Gender Development			Goal 1,5	Narayan Chandra Sarkar Assistant Rural Development Officer, Singra 01726963471, urdobrdb@gmail.com
Laying of 5.00 km pipe line at Singra Municipality of Natore District under "40 Municipality Water Supply and Environmental Sanitation Project"	Water Supply		Development and extension of existing water supply system including construction of 10 km new pipeline, 2 water pump stations and tubewells	Goal 6	Hasanuzzaman Sub Assistant Engineer +8801913-107271, shimulhasan71@gmail.com
Construction of Community Public Toilet funded by DPHE, Singra	Sanitation			Goal 6	Hasanuzzaman Sub Assistant Engineer +8801913-107271 shimulhasan71@gmail.com
Supplying and Installing of tara-2 tubewell funded by DPHE, Singra	Water Supply		Installation of 100 deep tubewells (Tara-2)	Goal 6	Hasanuzzaman Sub Assistant Engineer +8801913-107271 shimulhasan71@gmail.com
Working Lactating Mother Support Fund Program/Micro-cre	Women and Child Development			Goal 5	Sumi Akter Upazila Women Affairs Officer +8801744-320115 sumiuwao@gmail.com
Micro-credit Program for Women's Self Employment	Women Empowerment		Train 500 women and youth on self-employment and information and communication technology by 2021	Goal 8 and 5	Sumi Akter Upazila Women Affairs Officer +8801744-320115 sumiuwao@gmail.com

Voluntary Local Review (VLR) Report

Assessment of the Sustainable Development Goals in Singra, Bangladesh

Name of on-going project	Sector	Name of Project according to master plan	Name of planned/upcoming project	Link with SDGs (if mentioned during the workshop)	Contact details (phone, email etc.)
Women's Income Generating Program at Upazila Level	Women Empowerment			Goal 5	Sumi Akter Upazila Women Affairs Officer +8801744-320115 sumiuwao@gmail.com
Supporting Voluntary Women's Organization	Women Empowerment			Goal 5	Sumi Akter Upazila Women Affairs Officer +8801744-320115 sumiuwao@gmail.com
Prevention of Migratory Bird Hunting	Biodiversity Conservation			Goal 15	Hasan Imam, Co-chair +8801719-166750 singraelegance@gmail.com
Tree Plantation	Environmental Development and Climate Change		Plantation of trees along river banks under social forestry program	Goal 15	Subrata Kumar, General Secretary +8801724-909606 subratocontrol@gmail.com
	Green initiative		Electrification of boats under the green transport mobility	Goal 11,13	
	Waste Management		Extending the existing door-to-door waste collection system (up to 2,000 household)	Goal 11	
	Infrastructure Development		Widening of major roads in Singra	Goal 9,11	
	Recreation		Construction of Sheikh Russel Modern Children Park	Goal 11	
	Agriculture/Renewable energy		Solar based pump for irrigation with net metering system	Goal 2,7	

Mapping of Ongoing Projects in Singra under Different SDGs

Project Name	1. No poverty	2. Zero hunger	3. Good health and well-being	4. Quality education	5. Gender equality	6. Clean water and sanitation	7. Affordable and clean energy	8. Decent work and economic growth	9. Industry, innovation, and infrastructure	10. Reduced inequalities	11. Sustainable cities and communities	12. Responsible consumption and production	13. Climate action	14. Life below water	15. Life on land	16. Peace, justice and strong institutions	17. Partnerships for the goals
Town Protecting Embankment Project									Orange	Purple	Yellow						
Construction of Retaining wall on the left bank of Atrai and Nagar River									Orange		Yellow						
Important Urban Infrastructure Development Project - (IUDP)									Orange		Yellow						
Urban Infrastructure Development Project (IUDP)									Orange		Yellow						
Local Government Services Project-LGSP									Orange	Purple	Yellow						
Installation of Solar Street Lights in Singra Municipality Area							Yellow						Green				
Promoting E-Rickshaws as a Public Transport and Emergency Health Supporting Services			Green														
Free Training on Sewing for Women	Red				Red			Dark Red									
Free Training on Computer Outsourcing	Red							Dark Red	Orange		Yellow						
Regeneration and Beautification of Singra Municipal Canal" under Annual Development Program								Dark Red	Orange		Yellow				Blue		
Training, Loan Management and Small Grant Arrangement for Youth Employment	Red							Dark Red									
Total Digitization of Health Services from Registration to Service and Future Follow up			Green														
Tele-Medicine Service			Green														
Rural Vision Centre			Green														
Free Covid Vaccination Program	Red		Green														
Integrated Poverty Alleviation Program (somomito dardro bimochon kormosuchi)	Red				Red												
Women's Development Division Program (Mahila Unyayan Onu Bivag kormosuchi)	Red				Red												
Laying of 5.00 km pipe line at Singra Municipality of Natore District under "40 Municipality Water Supply and Environmental Sanitation Project"						Blue											
Construction of Community Public Toilet funded by DPHE, Singra						Blue											
Supplying and installing of tara-2 tubewell funded by DPHE, Singra						Blue											
Working Lactating Mother Support Fund Program/Micro-cre					Red			Dark Red									
Micro-credit Program for Women's Self Employment					Red			Dark Red									
Women's Income Generating Program at Upazila Level					Red												
Supporting Voluntary Women's Organization					Red												
Prevention of Migratory Bird Hunting														Green			
Tree Plantation														Green			
Electrification of boats under the green transport mobility														Green			
Extending the existing door-to-door waste collection system (up to 2,000 household)											Yellow		Green				
Widening of major roads in Singra									Orange		Yellow						
Solar based pump for irrigation with net metering system/Construction of Sheikh Russel Modern Children Park	Green						Yellow				Yellow						



বাগতম

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