

# DIMO

## MANAGING WASTEWATER AND SUSTAINING GROWTH



MEDIA SERVICES PHOTOFILE

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**A**s Sri Lanka navigates the challenges of climate change, urbanisation and industrial growth, management of wastewater is one of the most pressing environmental issues it faces.

Once seen merely as a technical or regulatory concern, it now lies at the core of national sustainability and corporate responsibility-driving resilience, innovation and long-term value creation for both business and society.

Chief Operating Officer of Water Projects & Fluid Technologies at DIMO Chandima Samarasinghe shares insights on strengthening Sri Lanka's wastewater management framework while illustrating how corporates can reframe their approach.

**Q:** At a national level, what steps should Sri Lanka take to strengthen wastewater management?

**A:** Having faced decades of limited investment in municipal wastewater management, Sri Lanka needs a structured and phased approach to address this challenge.

The first step is policy reform: introducing a comprehensive national wastewater management master plan that enforces wastewater, sewage and effluent discharge standards, particularly for industries and urban centres.

Given financial constraints, the country should promote decentralised wastewater treatment systems (DEWATS) such as constructed wetlands, and improved septic tanks and catchment collection centres – especial-

ly in small towns and peri-urban areas.

Public-private partnerships (PPP) can play a vital role in this effort with incentives such as tax breaks and long-term contracts to attract private investment.

Equally important is raising awareness about the health and environmental impacts of untreated wastewater, fostering public accountability and responsible waste disposal practices.

Urban planning regulations must also be updated to ensure wastewater systems are integrated into all new developments.

In the short-term, pilot projects in critical areas such as urban slums and tourist hubs can demonstrate successful models for replication.

At an institutional level, strengthening technical capacity through staff training and establishing a dedicated wastewater unit will improve accountability and efficiency.

Partnerships with international agencies such as the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) can provide both technical and financial assistance.

The country should develop a national monitoring system to gather data on wastewater generation, treatment and pollution hotspots, enabling evidence based policy making.

Collaborations with universities and research institutes will also be essential to develop cost-effective, locally appropriate technologies.

By taking these coordinated steps, the nation can build a robust, inclusive and sustainable wastewater management system even within financial constraints.

**Q:** Wastewater management is no longer merely a compliance requirement but a strategic imperative. How should corporates reframe their approach in this evolving context?

**A:** For the corporate sector, wastewater management should no longer be viewed merely as compliance but a strategic environmental, social and corporate governance (ESG) driven opportunity.

Integrating wastewater treatment into core business strategies enhances environmental stewardship, boosts ESG performance, and strengthens trust among investors, regulators and communities.

Modern wastewater systems also enable resource recovery such as nutrient extrac-

tion, biogas generation and water reuse, transforming waste into cost saving or revenue generating assets. These measures reduce exposure to water scarcity, regulatory risks and climate impacts while improving operational efficiency.

Moreover, strong wastewater practices create competitive advantages by granting access to sustainable supply chains and environmentally conscious investors.

Companies that take leadership in this area can also extend their expertise to others by offering consulting or technical services, effectively turning sustainability knowledge into new business opportunities.

Ultimately, wastewater management should be seen as a strategic imperative that fuels innovation, builds resilience and enhances long-term value creation for all stakeholders.

**Q:** When implementing sustainable wastewater management systems, what key factors should organisations consider to achieve maximum environmental and economic impact?

**A:** The foundation of sustainable wastewater management lies in robust wastewater or effluent treatment plants depending on the content of output water, which ensures that output water is properly treated before discharge or reuse.

Organisations must begin with regulatory compliance to avoid penalties and protect natural ecosystems.

Improving water use efficiency through audits and technological upgrades reduces the volume of wastewater generated while source level pollution prevention enhances treatment efficiency.

Segregating wastewater based on contamination levels allows for targeted treatment and greater reuse potential. Choosing the right mix of biological, chemical or natural treatment technologies is critical for effective outcomes.

Treated water can often be recycled within facilities, minimising dependence on freshwater. Energy efficient systems and sludge to energy recovery technologies further enhance cost savings.

And automation and real-time monitoring improve operational control while employee training and stakeholder engagement ensure long-term sustainability.

By aligning environmental responsibility with economic performance, organisations



DIMO has a proven track record in executing large-scale water and wastewater infrastructure projects

can create a win-win scenario where efficient wastewater management contributes directly to profitability and brand reputation.

**Q:** How is DIMO leveraging its expertise in water technologies to support businesses and authorities in developing effective wastewater management solutions?

**A:** Accredited as a C1 and EM-1 graded contractor by the Construction Industry Development Authority (CIDA), DIMO has a proven track record in executing large-scale water and wastewater infrastructure projects.

Our collaboration with L&T Construction of India for the Greater Colombo Wastewater Management Project for the Colombo Municipal Council (CMC) stands as a benchmark for engineering excellence.

In this project, DIMO served as a subcontractor responsible for civil construction, and the supply, installation, testing and commissioning of most of the mechanical and electrical (M&E) scope.

This included systems such as wastewater pumps, grit removal units, odour control systems, supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) automation, bar screens, hoisting systems and motorised valves.

The civil engineering component, akin to constructing a three storey structure underground, was particularly complex, reflecting the technical depth of our engineering team.

Our expertise extends beyond execution to design capabilities such as hydraulic flow analysis, sewer network design and integration of energy efficient, remotely operated systems.

As the local agent for globally recognised brands such as KSB pumps and DEMAG cranes, DIMO ensures reliability and

longevity even under harsh wastewater conditions.

DIMO itself is instrumental in treating its own effluent and wastewater to the stipulated parameters before discharging it into the environment, using the latest technologies that it has introduced to many other corporates over the years.

We are also ready to introduce advanced membrane based wastewater treatment technologies including ultrafiltration (UF), nanofiltration (NF) and polyvinylidene fluoride (PVDF) pressurised ultrafiltration systems, tailored to project specific requirements.

As a responsible corporate citizen, DIMO remains committed to partnering with government authorities to share expertise and technologies that advance Sri Lanka's wastewater infrastructure.

**Q:** What tangible benefits can robust wastewater management deliver?

**A:** The benefits are extensive and deeply interconnected. For corporates, effective wastewater management improves operational efficiency through water reuse and lower disposal costs while ensuring compliance with environmental regulations. It enhances brand reputation, attracts ESG focussed investors and opens doors to sustainable markets.

At the national level, strong wastewater systems protect water bodies from pollution, safeguard biodiversity and improve public health by reducing waterborne diseases. This has direct implications for sectors such as tourism and agriculture, which rely heavily on clean water resources.

Furthermore, effective wastewater management supports Sri Lanka's climate adaptation strategies, reduces flood risks, and aligns with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on clean water and sanitation.

Infrastructure development in this sector also generates employment and strengthens technical capacity among local professionals.

In essence, investing in wastewater management is an investment in national resilience, economic growth and environmental sustainability.

Given its natural blessings but environmental fragility, Sri Lanka has both the necessity and the opportunity to advance this sector and secure a sustainable future.