



**SGP COUNTRY PROGRAMME STRATEGY FOR OP7  
2020 - 2023**

**MALDIVES**

FINAL DRAFT

13 JANUARY 2020

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## List of Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
CIF	Condition Improvement Fund (UK)
COM	Commercial Funding Partners
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CPS	Country Programme Strategy
EIB	European Investment Bank
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
EU	European Union
GEF	Global Environmental Facility
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
HIES	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
ICCA GSI	Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas - Global Support Initiative
IWMC	Island Waste Management Center
JFJCM	Japan Fund for Joint Crediting Mechanism
ME	Ministry of Environment
MoFMRA	Ministry of Fisheries, Marine Resources and Agriculture
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoYSCE	Ministry of Youth, Sports and Community Empowerment
MSL	Mean Sea Level
MT	Metric Tonnes
MVR	Maldivian Rufiyaa
MW	Mega Watt
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NBS	National Bureau of Statistics
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
OP7	7 <sup>th</sup> Operational Cycle
SAP	Strategic Action Plan
SGP	Small Grant Programme
Sq. Km	Square Kilometre
SOE	State of the Environment
SST	Sea Surface Temperature
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNEP	United Nations Environment Program
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Program



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**OP7 Financial Resources - SGP Country Programme (estimated US\$)**

Total SGP Grants to date since (2010)	USD 2,366,000
OP7 GEF Core Funds:	USD \$500,000 (tbc)
OP7 GEF STAR Funds:	Nil
Other funds (secured)	Nil
Other funds (expected/to be mobilized)	-

**1. BACKGROUND**

As a corporate programme of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP), implemented by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) aligns its Operational Phase strategies with those of the GEF and co-financing partners, and provides a global portfolio of *innovative, inclusive, and impactful* projects that address global environmental and sustainable development issues.

Action at the local level by civil society and community-based organizations, including women groups, indigenous peoples, youth, and persons with disabilities is recognized essential to form multi-stakeholder alliances to deliver global environmental benefits and contribute to the GEF-7 Programming Directions, UNDP’s Strategic Plan 2018-2021, and national priorities to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals and other international commitments.<sup>1</sup>

Building on its over 26 years of successful operations in total over 133 countries, the 7<sup>th</sup> Operational Phase of the SGP aims “*to promote and support innovative, inclusive and scalable initiatives, and foster multi stakeholder partnerships at the local level to tackle global environmental issues in priority landscapes and seascapes.*”

The GEF programme has been supporting local grassroots initiatives in the Maldives since 2010 during the 4th Operational Cycle of the global grant scheme. The main objectives of the programme is to (i) facilitate conservation of endangered species including marine turtles and sea birds while promoting protection of ecologically sensitive habitats such as beaches, mangroves and coral reefs, (ii) address waste management on islands in an attempt to prevent pollution and degradation of the aforementioned sensitive habitats, (iii) enhancing chemical free, organic and sustainable methods of agriculture, (iv) accelerating the switch to renewable energy and (v) enhancing education, awareness and capacity building of civil society and communities in areas aligning with GEF priorities.

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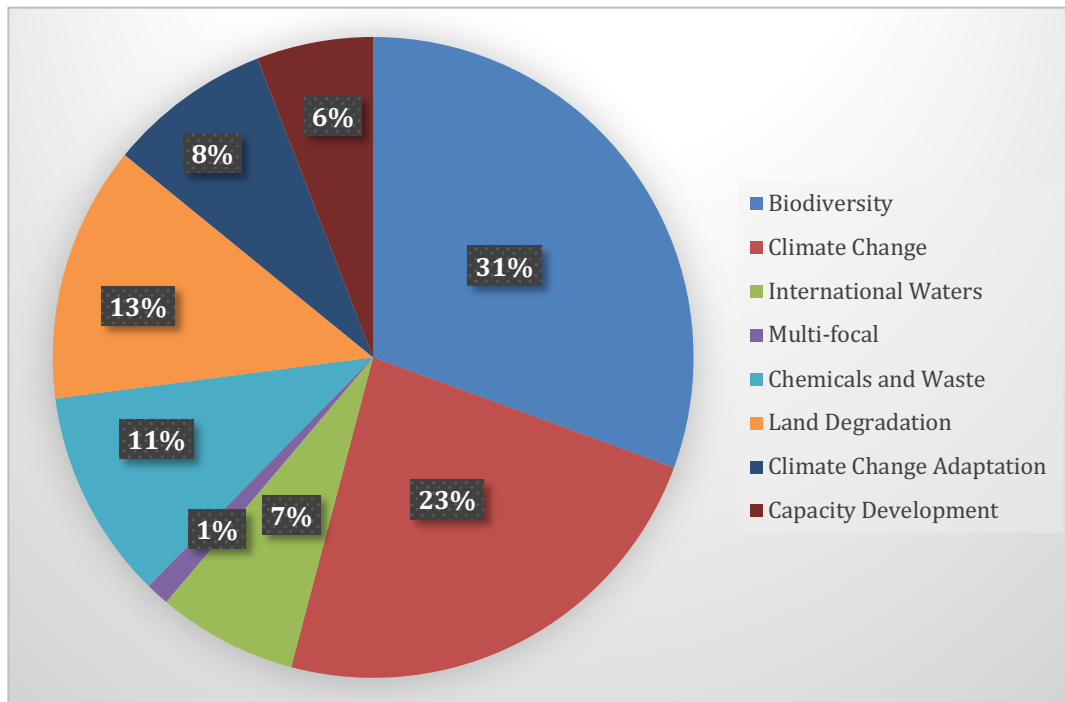
As the Maldives reaches its 10<sup>th</sup> year of GEF SGP, the Maldives has initiated over 85 community level projects over three operational cycles through USD 2,280,493 as core funds and funds from other donors. A notable majority of these projects have concentrated on biodiversity conservation and climate change (31 percent). Programme benefits have reached an estimated 53.46 percent of the national population since its implementation.

**Table 1: Project and GEF Focal Areas**

	No. of Projects	Grant Amount*	Co-financing in cash	Co-financing in kind
Biodiversity	26	641,710.00	90,984.00	265,629.00
Climate Change	20	649,222.00	211,077.00	128,239.00
International Waters	6	211,463.00	84,238.00	116,675.00
Multi-focal	1	11,400.00	-	4,271.00
Chemicals and Waste	9	208,854.00	18,486.00	26,058.00
Land Degradation	11	257,205.00	70,679.00	31,983.00
Climate Change Adaptation**	7	169,939.00	-	6,780.00
Capacity Development	5	130,700.00	9,103.00	36,319.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>2,280,493.00</b>	<b>484,567.00</b>	<b>615,954.00</b>

*\*Funds included under this comprises of GEF Core Allocations, STAR Allocations, SIDS CBA & ICCA GSI*

*\*\*This is funded through SIDS CBA*



**Figure 1: Number of GEF SGP Grants in the Maldives, 2010 – 2019**

This Country Programme Strategy (CPS) has been formulated for the period 2020 to 2024 for the 7<sup>th</sup> Operational Cycle of the Global Environment Facility’s Small Grant Programme (GEF SGP) for the Maldives. The CPS has been formulated based on the findings of an evidence-based baseline assessment formulated to determine the current country status with regard to the environment and socially vulnerable groups and on the current Maldivian development trajectory based on expert consultations and the Government’s Strategic Action Plan (2019-2023) which outlines the development priorities for the next five years. It has also been informed by an independent review of grant projects implemented thus far and the lessons learned from these projects as shared by the grantees.

## **2. SUMMARY: KEY RESULTS/ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

GEF SGP in the Maldives paved the way for the island communities and citizens to take ownership of the conservation and protection of their surrounding environment. It has acted as a driving force and provided communities with opportunities to apply locally led solutions to environmental issues, transform knowledge, attitude and practices and increase awareness.



The highest number of community led projects implemented through the GEF SGP concentrated in the area of biodiversity (30 percent). Some notable results include a project implemented in Kaafu Kaashidhoo to conserve the threatened Maldivian black tortoise and Maldivian water hen which produced findings related to the breeding behavior of the species and increased knowledge and awareness amongst the community for their conservation. It is observed that a number of biodiversity projects focused on mangroves. Some notable results from mangrove-based biodiversity projects include a project carried out in Haa Alifu Kelaa which contributed to scientific research that prompted the declaration of the Haa Alifu Kelaa mangrove as a protected area in the Maldives. A follow up project by the same NGO led to improved access to the mangroves and other natural habitats for people with disabilities. Another similar project undertaken in Gaafu Dhaalu Fiyoaree helped the revival of reed – a natural vegetation grown in the island that had significant ecological and cultural value for the people of Fiyoaree, particularly women. Through the project, the women of Fiyoaree were able to revive a dying tradition and art form and build a livelihood mechanism which built on traditional knowledge while contributing towards conservation and sustainable use of natural resources.

Looking at climate change focal area, a number of projects focused on reducing GHG emissions. A project carried out in R. Vaadhoo installed solar panels in the island which was able to generate 24 kw of electricity during peak hours meeting the energy needs of 32 percent of the population of that island. The NGO is currently scaling up the project to have 100 percent coverage through renewable energy. In the south, a similar project demonstrated in Addu High School led to improved learning on sustainable energy use for students and staff. At present, the primary energy source of the school is solar energy. Excess energy produced in the school is supplied to the island's utility service provider under net metering arrangements. In Gaafu Dhaalu Hoadeddhoo, a GEF grant enabled increase in awareness on energy efficiency through a street LED light project. Through this project, behavioral changes in the community to transition towards energy efficient sources and technology have been observed and reported.

Under chemicals and waste focal area, a demonstrative project in Noonu Atoll Holhudhoo introduced a sustainable homebased agriculture model which reduced POPs. This was achieved through a hydroponics system suitable for home gardening. The project enabled efficient use of fertilizers while contributing to community level awareness on pesticide free gardening and best practices in agriculture. Similarly, in Haa Alifu Vashafaru, a community led project led to increased coastal protection through planting trees around the island's coastline as a natural defense mechanism against erosion. In Addu City, an all women project saw the planting of 400 coconut palms as a means of improving land quality, contributing to biodiversity and improving livelihoods. Within the same atoll, a project in Hulhumeedhoo, saw improved agroforestry awareness and action within the community. Over two projects, the community was able to instill good agroforestry practices into agriculture, while contributing to the plantation of numerous types of fruit trees across the island whilst improving livelihoods.

In the area of International Waters, two youth led projects carried out in Kaafu Atoll Villingili and Lhaviyani Naifaru saw improved marine conservation and management. These projects led to creation of citizen scientists within the community, working on areas on marine conservation, coral conservation collecting data and monitoring.

### 3. COUNTRY PRIORITIES AND STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

#### 3.1. Alignment with National Priorities

Community led initiatives such as the GEF small grant programme provides important value addition to all national priorities and help in the attainment of internationally agreed targets. Table 1 below outlines the relevant conventions and national plans/programmes that are pertinent to this CPS.

*Table 2: List of relevant conventions and national/regional plans or programmes*

Conventions + national planning frameworks	Date of ratification / completion
Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)	09 – 11 – 1992
Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal	1992
CBD National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP)	2016 - 2025
Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity	2003
Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-Sharing (ABS)	01. 07. 2019
UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)	09 – 11 - 1992
UNFCCC National Communications (1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> )	05 – 11 – 2001 (1 <sup>st</sup> ), 2011 (2 <sup>nd</sup> )
UNFCCC Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMA)	n/a
UNFCCC National Adaptation Plans of Action (NAPA)	2007
Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) for Paris Accord	2016
UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)	03 – 09 - 2002
UNCCD National Action Programmes (NAP)	03 – 09 - 2002
Stockholm Convention (SC) on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)	17 – 10 – 2006
SC National Implementation Plan (NIP)	2017
Minamata Convention (MC) on Mercury	n/a
UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	2015
Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) for the UN SDGs	2017
<b>Others relevant conventions</b>	
Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety	2002
CITES	2012
SC National Implementation Plan (NIP)	n/a
Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP)	n/a
Maldives Energy Strategy	2010
GEF National Capacity Self-Assessment (NCSA)	January 2009
GEF-6 National Portfolio Formulation Exercise (NPFE)	Not conducted
Strategic Action Programmes (SAPs) for shared international waterbodies	1995
<b>National Laws/Regulations/Policies</b>	
Strategic Action Plan of the Government of Maldives	2019 – 2023
Environmental Protection and Preservation Act	1993

Uninhabited islands act	1998
Tourism Act	1999
The Land Law	2002
Ozone Layer Protection Act	2015
Disaster Management Law	2015
Gender Equality Law	2016
Regulation on protection and conservation of the environment in the tourism industry	2006
Uprooting of Trees Regulation	2007
National Waste Management Strategy	2008
Environment Liability Regulation	2011
Plant Protection Act	2011
Hanifaru Management Regulation	2012
Dewatering regulation	2013
National Waste Management Policy	2015
Maldives Energy Policy and Strategy	2015
Regulation on Environmental Impact Assessment	2012
Regulation on Land Reclamation and Dredging	2013
Migratory Birds Regulation	2014
Regulation to control import of bird species as pets	2015
Addu City Protected Area Regulation	2018
Fuvahmulah City Protected Area Regulation	2018
The Law on the Maldives Fisheries, Plant Protection Act	2010
Coral and Sand Mining Regulation	1993

### 3.2. Gaps and Opportunities

Based on the environmental priorities given above and the experience of grant implementation through the GEF country programme, areas on biodiversity conservation and climate change is observed to present the best opportunity for meaningful community engagement. National level targets set forth in the NBSAP and the Governments SAP identifies numerous entry points for community led initiatives. Similarly, given that the majority of the climate change related projects undertaken so far have focused on installation of solar energy and LED lights, continuation of these types of projects is an opportunity to align with national targets on reducing GHG emissions and increasing share on renewable energy in the energy mix laid out in the NDC and SAP. There is also increased focus on blue economy in the current SAP with national targets set for sustainable fisheries, agriculture (and diversification of these sectors) and on ecotourism. This presents an opportunity to align GEF SGP with national targets and create synergies with government programs.

Significant gaps are observed in the areas of chemical and waste management and in international waters. While these two areas have received very low number of projects, national frameworks on these areas are also weak and undefined. However, agricultural projects, if designed well, can contribute to all three areas. Usage of chemical free pesticides, organic fertilizers, employing a circular economy model for agriculture and waste management would be ideal ways in which community projects can align with these

focal areas. Improved waste management and reduced entry of surface contaminants to groundwater aquifers would enhance its quality (linking to international waters in the SIDS context). Developing management plans for marine ecosystems, creation of community conserved areas or marine parks can be potential projects to fill the gap for international waters.

### 3.3.OP7 Strategic Priorities of the SGP Country Programme

**Table 3: Country Programme's alignment with SGP OP7 Strategic Initiatives and Country Priorities/Projects/Programmes**

1	2	3
SGP OP7 Strategic Initiatives - Global	SGP Country Programme's OP7 Priorities	SGP Country Programme's complementarity with GEF, UNDP, and other projects and programmes
<i>Community-based conservation of threatened ecosystems and species</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Improve management effectiveness of protected areas through ICCAs and shared governance with private sector and government.</li> <li>ii) Improve community-led biodiversity friendly practices and approaches, including promoting blue economy (e.g. agriculture, fisheries, forestry, tourism, infrastructure, etc.)</li> <li>iii) Enhance community led actions for protection of threatened species</li> </ul>	<p>Community based ecosystem conservation work and species protection work have not been carried out at a national level, but, a selection of stand-alone projects have been implemented by both Government and development partners. The Baa Atoll Ecosystem Conservation Project jointly implemented by UNDP and Ministry of Environment resulted in the atoll being declared as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in 2011. The Nature Parks developed in Addu and Fuvahmulah under the Climate Change Adaptation Programme funded by EU and Australian Aid is also a notable example.</p> <p>Under the Environmental Protection Law and the power vested in Local Councils through the Decentralization Act, local councils have the authority to declare natural ecosystems within their jurisdiction as protection. Examples of such cases include the 5 different ecosystems declared as protected by the Laamu Atoll Council</p>



		<p>in 2019, including important wetland systems, lakes, islands, reefs and channels.</p> <p>With the amendments to the decentralization act, there is likely to be more focus and funds directed at community-based conservation efforts. The SAP (2019-2023) promotes Blue Economy including sustainable tourism, fisheries, agriculture and economic diversification as key priorities for the next 5 years. The SAP includes targets to have at least one island, one sandbank, one mangrove and one reef protected in each atoll.</p>
<p><i>Sustainable agriculture and fisheries, and food security</i></p>	<p>i) Increase efficiency and effectiveness of overall food production and value chain, including in vulnerable ecosystems</p> <p>ii) Increase diversification and livelihood improvement</p>	<p><i>Livelihood Enhancement of the small farmers in SAARC Region through small scale agro-business focusing on value chain Development</i></p> <p><i>Project locations: Sh. Milandhoo &amp; Sh. Goidhoo (SAARC Development Funded Project)</i>  <i>SDF: US\$ 189,933.00</i>  <i>GOM: US\$ 112,500.00M (in-kind)</i></p>
<p><i>Low-carbon energy access co-benefits</i></p>	<p>i) Promote renewable and energy efficient technologies providing socio-economic benefits and improving livelihoods.</p> <p>ii) Support implementation of Paris Agreement and the NDCs</p>	<p><i>The Government together with Development Banks are conducting the following nationwide programmes.</i></p> <p><b><i>i) Preparing Outer Islands for Sustainable Energy Development</i></b>  <i>Funded: ADB, CIF, EIB, JFJCM, EU</i>  <i>Total amount:</i>  <i>ADB: USD 38M</i>  <i>CIF: USD 12M</i>  <i>EIB: EURO 50M</i>  <i>JFJCM: USD 5M</i>  <i>EU: EURO 5M</i>  <i>GOM: USD 14M</i>  <i>Islands: 160 inhabited islands covering All atolls Except Laamu and Gnaviyani atoll</i></p> <p><b><i>b. Accelerating Sustainable Private Investments in Renewable Energy</i></b></p>

		<p><i>Funded: Private investments (under PPA model) with world bank guarantees</i>  <i>Total Amount: N/A</i></p> <p><b>c. Strengthening Low-Carbon Energy Island Strategies</b>  <i>Funded: GEF/UNEP/GOM</i>  <i>Total amount:</i>  <i>GEF: USD 3,885,000</i>  <i>UNEP: USD 250,000</i>  <i>GOM: USD 34M (in-kind contribution)</i></p>
<p><i>Local to global coalitions for chemicals and waste management</i></p>	<p>i) Promote plastics/solid waste management and circular economy</p> <p>ii) Reduce/remove use of chemicals in agriculture</p>	<p>The following projects are being undertaken by the Ministry of Environment in the area of waste management</p> <p><b>a) Maldives Clean Environment Project.</b>          Funded by; World bank          Total Amount: USD 17.5 Million          Geographic focus: Noonu, Raa, Baa, Lhaviyani, Meemu, Faafu, Dhaalu, Thaa and Laamu Atolls</p> <p><b>b) Greater Male' Environment Improvement and Waste management Project.</b>          Funded by: ADB (Asian Development Bank)          Total Amount: 1<sup>st</sup> quarter: 40 Million USD, 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter: 129.47 million USD.          Atolls covering: Alifu Alifu, Alifu Dhaalu, Vaavu and Kaafu Atolls</p> <p><b>c) Small Scale waste to energy Project IRENA- ADF</b>          Funded by; ADFD (Abu Dhabi fund for development)          Total amount: 21 M          Islands Covering; Fuvahmulah, Addu, Gaafu Alifu and Gaafu Dhaalu</p> <p>Zone 1 (Haa Alifu, Haa Dhaalu and Shaviyani)          Total Amount: 9.1M (local + OFID)</p>

<p><i>Community-based Adaptation</i></p>	<p>i) Reduce vulnerability and improve the adaptive capacity of communities through CCAs</p>	<p>Efforts are underway to develop a “Community Conservation Area” in Noonu Atoll in northern Maldives. This would include conservation efforts by 6 islands focusing on mangroves, shoreline, reefs and its biodiversity.</p>
<p><i>CSO-Government-Private Sector Policy and Planning Dialogue Platforms</i></p>	<p>i) Promote/enhance community voices and participation in global and national policy, strategy development related to global environment and sustainable development issues</p>	<p>The Ministry of Environment with the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Community Empowerment is planning a National Environment Symposium with environment-related CSOs in June 2020.</p>
<p><i>Enhancing social inclusion (mandatory)</i></p>	<p><i>Enhancing social inclusion</i></p> <p>i) Promote targeted initiatives</p> <p>ii) Mainstream social inclusion in all projects</p>	<p>Government of Maldives has developed a National Gender Action Plan under the Gender Equality Law that would outline sector level interventions to improve gender equality and women’s participation across the nation. This is currently at the approval stage at the President’s Office.</p> <p>Community Social Groups have been established by the Government in all inhabited islands to address all social issues and lead community empowerment work.</p> <p>UNDP IGP Programme conducts the following programs, focusing on Haa Alifu, Haa Dhaalu and Shaviyani atolls.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Miyaheli Social Innovation Camp</li> <li>- Youth Co-Lab</li> <li>- Film for Change</li> </ul>
<p><i>Knowledge Management (mandatory)</i></p>	<p><i>Knowledge Management</i></p> <p>i) Capture knowledge and lessons from projects and activities</p> <p>ii) Improve capacities of CSOs/CBOs</p> <p>iii) Conduct South-South Exchanges to promote technology transfer and replication of good practices</p>	<p>MoYSCE conducts regular training workshops to build local civil society capacity.</p>

<p><i>Results Management, Monitoring &amp; Evaluation (mandatory)</i></p>	<p><i>Results Management, Monitoring &amp; Evaluation</i></p> <p><i>i) Administer new M&amp;E strategy in country programme and project design, implementation and overall decision making using participatory mechanisms</i></p>	<p>Isles.gov platform have been established by the President's Office to showcase progress of development projects across the country.</p> <p>President's Office will hold quarterly working group meetings with NGOs and government agencies to track progress of SAP</p>
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#### 4. OP7 PRIORITY LANDSCAPES/SEASCAPES & STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

##### 3.4. Grantmaking Within the Priority Landscape/Seascapes

###### a) Process for selecting priority landscapes and seascapes

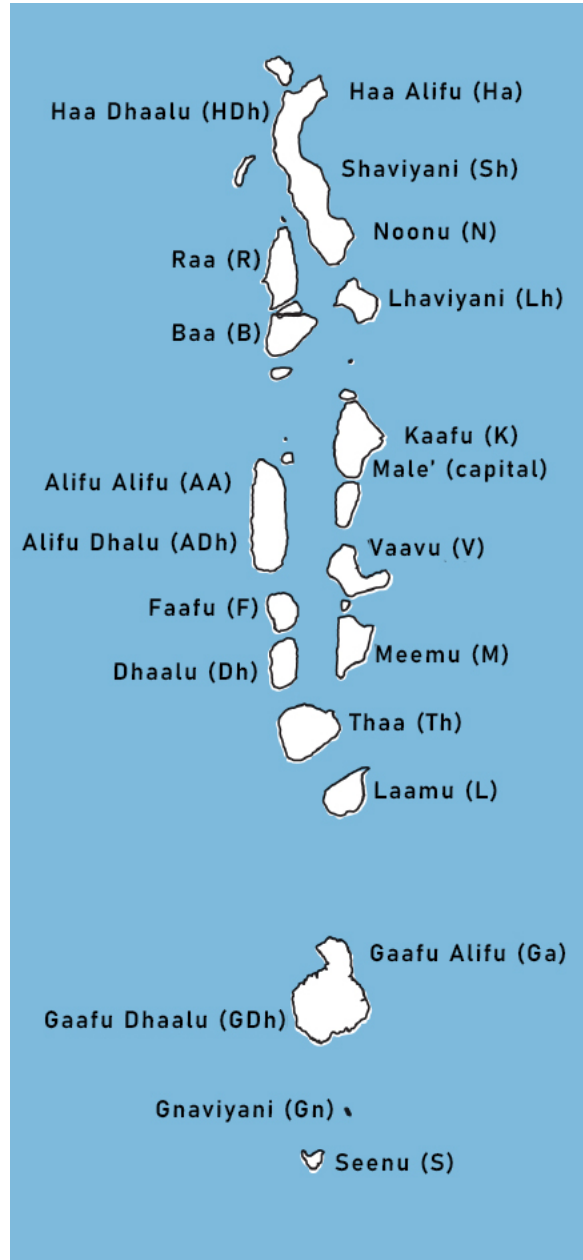
The process for selecting the priority landscape/seascape for the Maldives for OP7 mainly followed the instructions and guidance provided in the Terms of Reference document and discussions with the National Steering Committee. An initial desk review was undertaken of relevant grey literature, including reports published by government and international donor agencies, quantitative and qualitative information, policy documents and media reports. Simultaneous consultations were also conducted with key sector ministries, state owned enterprises, United Nations Agencies and financial institutions. Due to time and budgetary restrictions, community consultations were not held, however, in-depth telephone interviews were conducted with randomly selected former grantees to obtain insight into their opinion on the GEF SGP and their experiences in project implementation and sustainability.

A baseline assessment consolidating all information collated during the process was developed which was used as the basis for identifying the priority focal areas for OP7. A key limitation faced while formulating the baseline was the significant data limitations across different areas, particularly, at the atoll level. This hindered conducting a detailed atoll level analysis which in turn made it difficult to pinpoint vulnerabilities across the atolls. Due to this, national level data was collected and analyzed to determine the focal areas.

Based on the experiences of the previous cycles, Maldives as a whole will be identified as a single landscape/seascape for the Maldivian CPS for OP7. This is decided based on the stakeholder consultations which reaffirmed the advantages of this singular approach and data limitations which hinder identifying separate atolls or regions to focus on, based on evidence.

**b) Selected Landscapes/Seascapes for OP7**

The Maldives is an Indian Ocean archipelago comprised of 1,900 small coral islands scattered between the geographic coordinates 7°6'35" N to 0°42'24" S and 72°32'19" E to 73°46'13" W. The total area of the country is 115,300 sq. km and 99 percent of this area is ocean. The islands are naturally clustered into 26 atolls but is administratively divided into 20 atolls. Of the 1,900 islands, 187 are inhabited and over 101 are used for tourism and 14 islands for industrial purposes.





Physical characteristics of the islands vary among the islands. Islands in the north are mostly surrounded by patch reefs and faros with shallow lagoons (40 – 50 m) while southern atolls have closed reefs and deeper lagoons (70 – 80 m). Islands can take form of either a sandbank to elongated islands or as circular ones, located either on the atoll ridge or within the lagoon. The location and physical characteristics of each island greatly determine their susceptibility to natural hazards, erosion and accretion and availability of natural resources (e.g. mangroves, quality of groundwater). Over 80 percent of the land area is less than 1 meter above mean sea level making the Maldives the flattest country on earth.

The main ecosystems found in the country includes forest areas, coastal vegetation area, mangroves and wetland systems, beaches, seagrass meadows and coral reefs. These ecosystems are interconnected and provides important ecosystem services to each other and to the people.

Terrestrial vegetation is limited subjective to the geographic formation of the islands and biophysical characteristics. A total of 583 vascular plants of which 55 percent can be cultivated and 45 percent native have been identified. Coastal vegetation in particular provides important shoreline protection against strong winds and erosion while controlling saltwater infiltration to the aquifers. Mangroves are found in 150 islands in either enclosed or semi-enclosed forms, featuring 14 species (varied across the islands and regions), and representing a total area of 7.19 sq. km. Beaches make 5 percent of the total land area and holds significant economic, social and cultural value to the Maldivian people. Erosion, though a natural process, is a significant issue that have been exacerbated through climate change related fluctuations and human induced modifications to the natural environment. In 2016, 80 percent of the islands reported erosion as a key environmental concern. There is very limited understanding and research on seagrass meadows of the Maldives. However, six species of seagrass are known to be found in the Maldives of which *Thalassia Hemprichii* is the most common. Adjacent to most seagrass meadows are interconnecting coral reef systems. The total reef area in the Maldives is 4515.14 sq. km. Approximately 2,041 distinctive coral reefs and 200 species of stony corals have been mapped in the Maldives. These reefs are the 7<sup>th</sup> largest reef ecosystem in the world.

The Maldives, being located on the equator, experiences tropical monsoon climate. There are two distinct monsoon periods; the southwest monsoon or the 'wet period' extending from mid-May to November and the northeast monsoon or the 'dry period' spreading from January to March. Temperature varies between 25 to 30 degree Celsius whereby the warmer months falls immediately following the dry period during March, April and May. Many islands run out of rainwater stocks during this period. Precipitation also varies with the monsoons. Northern atolls receive less rainfall than southern atolls. An average 2,218 mm of rain were observed in southern atolls per year as opposed to 1,779 mm/year in northern atolls over a 20-year period.

As mentioned under part (a) of this section, the process of updating the baseline followed the instructions given under the Terms of Reference for developing the CPS. A desk review was conducted to collate all secondary sources that yielded quantitative and qualitative data relevant to the baseline. Simultaneously, consultations were held with relevant stakeholders from different sector ministries, state owned enterprises, United Nations and the financial sector. Further insight was also obtained from telephone interview with former grantees. One question that was specifically asked from each party was their thought on the current landscape/seascape approach which recognized the whole Maldives as a singular landscape/seascape. It was found that there was near universal agreement that the same

landscape/seascape approach that has been employed since the introduction of the SGP to the Maldives in 2010, should be continued. The following factors were identified as the reasons for this continuation.

- The Maldives is a small country constrained with unique challenges owing to its spatial profile and geographic disparity. An approach that requires selecting *priority* landscapes or seascapes is not well suited to the Maldivian context as the whole country can be categorized as a singular landscape/seascape.
- All islands in the Maldives is extremely vulnerable to climate change and natural disasters. They also share similar constraints and development challenges including its small size, limited technical, human resource and financial capacity, narrow economic base and susceptibility to external shocks.
- As a middle-income country there is significant limitations in funding available, particularly through Grant Schemes. The GEF SGP has established itself as a reliable and effective funding source that caters for the grassroot or community led initiatives. Continuity of the GEF SGP's focus to the whole of Maldives will be imperative to complement other centrally or locally driven projects and achieve broader development results.
- There are significant limitations in the number of active NGOs and CBOs in the Maldives and restricting the GEF SGP focus to specific atolls or regions will significantly limit the number of potential grantees who can contribute towards achieving intended results.
- Limitations in available data that is disaggregated by locality hinders generating an accurate snapshot of atoll specific strengths and vulnerabilities that can???

### c) OP7 Strategic Initiatives in the landscapes/seascapes

The CPS for Maldives for OP7 will focus on the following strategic initiatives

- Strategic Initiative 1 – Community based conservation of threatened ecosystems and species
- Strategic Initiative 2 – Sustainable agriculture and fisheries leading to food security
- Strategic Initiative 3 – Low carbon energy access co-benefits
- Strategic Initiative 4 – Local to global coalitions for chemicals and waste management

The following focal areas have been identified under these broad initiatives.

#### Focal area One: Biodiversity

- Improved management of marine protected areas and community conserved areas, linking to ecotourism and improved livelihoods
- Coastal Zone Management including protection, rehabilitation, protecting and conserving mangroves and seagrass, species identification and mapping, data collection and monitoring work, advocacy and awareness programs
- Formation of Community Conserved Areas
- Projects focusing on waste minimization, tackling plastic issues, citizen science engagement, production of materials, billboards and signage at ecologically sensitive areas to complement ecotourism efforts in community.



- Threatened species conservation including habitat protection, data collection and monitoring activities

#### **Focal area two: Climate Change**

- Promote the introduction and uptake of renewable energy in outer islands
- Energy efficiency retrofitting
- Conduct energy audits
- Use of innovative low carbon energy solutions for fisheries, agriculture and other livelihood activities including tourism
- GHG Data collection and inventory through citizen science programs

#### **Focal area three: Chemicals and Waste**

- Promoting circular economy models focusing on solid waste management, plastic management and linking to agriculture and other livelihood and industrial activities
- Promoting the use of chemical free fertilizers and organic farming through training and demonstration
- waste audits
- Exploring local solutions to ensure effective management of chemicals and chemical containing products at the end of their lifecycle (e.g., batteries, e-waste)
- Removal and management of POPs and other hazardous chemicals from waste streams

#### **Focal area Four: International Waters**

- Facilitating groundwater management and natural recharge
- Protection of inland lakes from land-based pollution
- Improving efficiency of water usage
- Clean-up programs linked with waste management and behavioral change.
- Develop management plans for significant marine habitats within a given jurisdiction leading to the cumulative protection of large marine ecosystems
- Land and water management
- Innovative demonstrations to remove contaminants to groundwater and other water bodies
- Promoting sustainable fisheries practices including improved bait fisheries, monitoring catch size, promoting traditional fisheries practices through use of modern technology or social media platforms to contribute towards its preservation, capture lessons and create awareness, using science and innovation to improve fish catch and storage
- Improve data collection on deep sea fisheries and reef fisheries
- Projects on multi-species bait hatcheries, grouper and sea cucumber grow-out cages, aquaculture, mariculture to enhance sustainability of this developing sector

#### **Cross Cutting Areas**

- Medium to large scale tree planting (e.g. coastal vegetation, coconut palms, shade-giving trees) as a mitigation action while contributing to biodiversity and conservation efforts
- Capacity Development programs aimed at building local capacity



- Environmental education and awareness programmes
- Knowledge capturing and management related works to showcase successes and documenting lessons
- Study tours and networking
- Financial sustainability and cost recovery mechanisms for continuity of operations and management of SGP interventions
- Alignment/influence/advocacy towards local development planning

Note: All projects are encouraged to incorporate at least one activity that contributes towards (i) reduction of single use plastic disposed and (ii) improving gender equality (targeting to address at least one gender gap identified in the gender analysis conducted at the project development stage)

### **3.5. Grantmaking Outside the Priority Landscapes/Seascapes**

#### ***a) CSO-Government-Private Sector Dialogue Platform***

Geographic disparity of the Maldives and limitations in the public transport networks increases the cost of travel and logistics making traditional dialogue platforms highly expensive and unfeasible within the Maldivian context. By design, most similar platforms often exclude certain groups of people, particularly those belonging to peripheral communities, youth, women and people with disabilities.

Based on this geographic reality, a web-based social media platform was organized as an innovative solution that addressed the geographic detachment of the Maldivian islands. The Maldives has the highest teledensity rate in the region with 246.9 mobile subscriptions per 100 people. Mobile data usage has also increased by 283 percent during the period of GEF SGP implementation in the Maldives. Social media and other web-based platforms have thus proven to be more suited to the local context while also be a more inclusive and convenient way to establish a dialogue platform. However, it is recognized that there is need to employ differentiated communication methods to reach different groups of people. While social media may be an effective way to reach a large population base, traditional mass media including TV and Radio and mass SMS are better means to reach women, elderly, people with disabilities and peripheral communities.

During OP7, GEF SGP aims to expand these platforms from the current CSO-Government focus to involve the private sector. Involving the private sector would expand opportunities for further investment, scale up and sustainability of projects at the local level. GEF SGP will establish partnerships with the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Community Empowerment and the Ministry of Environment to conduct this dialogue platform as part of the National Environmental Symposium being planned for 2020 with NGOs and the Government partners. The country programme will continue this dialogue in subsequent years through potential plug in to UNDP's "Make My Island" initiative to identify projects which align with the respective CSR strategies of the private sector partners. Other UNDP platforms including "Miyaheli", "Social Innovation Challenge", "Youth Co-Lab" offers potential entry points for the CSO-Government-Private Sector Dialogue Platforms.

Taking the experiences and lessons from the grassroots level to the national policy dialogue is recognized within the OP7 as a key strategy to accelerate results. The newly formulated Strategic Action Plan (SAP) NGO network is recognized as a key national platform whereby NGOs and CSOs from the GEF SGP requires engagement. This network aims to provide quality assurance to implementation and monitoring of the SAP through NGO led working coalitions under three broad thematic areas. These areas are (i) Blue Economy and Jazeera Dhiriulhun (Island Life), (ii) Caring State and Dignified Families and (iii) Good Governance. The SAP-NGO network aims to prepare evidence based quarterly policy reviews of selected sectors and prepare feedback to the SAP Annual reporting process. While the exact modality of the SAP-NGO network's working sessions remains undetermined, it is important to engage in early dialogue to ensure effective and meaningful participation and contribution to this national dialogue.

### ***b) Promoting Social Inclusion, including gender equality and women's empowerment***

Promoting social inclusion is a chief priority of the OP7. The benefits of engaging and working with socially vulnerable groups, such as women, youth and people with disabilities as well as the value addition brought forth through engagement with these groups is widely recognized by GEF. The CPS will aim to promote social inclusion through both specific initiatives and projects targeted at these groups and through mainstreaming an inclusive approach across all GEF SGP projects.

Young people, women and people with disabilities face differentiated challenges in private and public spheres of life. These include access to natural resources, training and capacity building requirements and most importantly socially construction norms and perception that shape their daily lives. These unique challenges require recognition while designing and implementing any programme that aims to improve their livelihoods. The following targeted interventions will be employed by the GEF SGP to promote social inclusion and gender equality (a checklist for the NSC and NC for these interventions has been included under the Annexes of this document)

- A set target of 33 percent of all grant funding will be dedicated to projects led by women.<sup>2</sup>
- Women and girls will constitute at least 50 percent of all beneficiaries of projects implemented within OP7. Similarly, a target to have 33 percent of all projects to be led by youth groups will be set.<sup>3</sup>
- Efforts will be made to ensure that the call for concepts reach most vulnerable groups, particularly those in peripheral communities, through tested mediums and targeted approaches.
- The NSC will issue a special call for proposal for projects led by female entrepreneurs and groups at least twice during the OP7 period.
- Provisions will be made to encourage submission of concepts through local language, oral or in video format to include vulnerable groups such as women or people with disabilities.

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<sup>2</sup> 'Women led projects' refers to those projects that (i) have a female as the key focal point or as the President or Vice President of the NGO/CSO (ii) have a female as the Project Manager (iii) have females constituting minimum 50% of membership.

<sup>3</sup> "Youth led projects" refers to those projects that have (i) a person between 15-35 years as the key focal point or as the President or Vice President of the NGO/CSO (ii) a person between 15-35 years as the project manager (iii) 50% of the membership of the NGO/CSO are younger than 35 years.



- A simplified guidance note or checklist will be developed and disseminated along with the call for concept to encourage potential grantees to identify interventions for gender equality and social inclusivity through their projects.
- A detailed Communications Strategy and Stakeholder Engagement Plan will be carried out during the first year of the OP7 cycle to map the stakeholders and determine the best methods to overcome geographic and communication barriers. This strategy will aim to map CSO's and NGO's across the country, their areas of involvement and community service, gender makeup and capacity development needs.
- The SGP will encourage equal participation of male and female participants in the project management workshops.
- Existing project proposal templates will be reviewed with the help from regional technical support to include a gender analysis for the host community
- A gender specialist will be engaged to support the needs assessment and gender analysis exercises carried out by the participants of the project management workshop. The gender specialist will guide participants to mainstream gender in all phases of project implementation, monitoring and reporting. The gender specialist will follow the guidelines included under Annex 2 of this document whilst carrying out this work.
- The NSC and NC will encourage participants in the project management workshop to consult with both male and female members of their host community during the early stages of project design to identify differentiates needs, expectations, knowledge and distribution of project benefits equally among members of the society.
- The NSC will ensure that gender equality is one of the main evaluation criteria.
- The NSC will employ a checklist and criteria to assess and screen projects for gender mainstreaming.
- The NSC will reflect on the potential interventions identified under the GEF Gender Strategy and Action Plan in granting approval to project proposals (refer to annex 3)
- The NSC will refer to the Project Review Sheet provided by GEF during project approval work.
- The NSC will ensure all projects have at least one indicator relating to gender equality and social inclusivity.
- The NSC will encourage and facilitate targeted support for grantees requiring special consideration. These will include but not be limited to training, capacity building opportunities, networking, mentoring, participation in national and regional workshops, access to resources etc)
- The NSC will ensure that a Gender Specialist with relevant knowledge and experience is appointed as the gender focal point of the committee.
- All SGP employees including the NC and the Gender Focal Point of the NSC will undertake mandatory e-courses on gender and environment.
- The NC will organize annual gender sensitization training for all NSC members through the project management workshop or with the support of an independent technical expert.
- The NC will collect information and data to contribute towards knowledge management on gender mainstreaming and social inclusivity through study of regional experiences and lessons from local projects.
- The proposed newsletter will contain a section including information on gender mainstreaming initiatives, success stories, lessons learnt and links to resources.
- The SGP will explore possible partnership with both internal partners within UNDP and with government partners. These will include the Integrated Governance Programme of the UNDP

Maldives CO, Ministry of Youth, Sports and Community Empowerment, Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Gender, Family and Social Services.

- External partners, where available, will be invited to sit in the concept and proposal evaluation stages and extend gender sensitization support through the Project Cycle Management workshop.

### c) *Knowledge Management*

The GEF SGP offers an invaluable source of community knowledge and successful methods for improved sustainable development and wide-ranging environmental benefits. Knowledge management, in relation to GEF SGP, is therefore imperative to ensure the knowledge generated through the programme benefits other similar efforts, locally, nationally and globally.

During OP7, an important focus will be given to generate and disseminate knowledge products. The GEF SGP has accumulated a wealth of knowledge across the country on areas most crucial to economic development and social well-being of the people during its 10 years of operation in the Maldives

The Maldives CPS will follow a similar structure to the global knowledge management system, i.e., the global level, national level and local level. The strategic initiatives that is listed under each of these levels will aim to capture local knowledge and expertise, provide a voice to local CSOs, identify new approaches and ways of learning, improve effectiveness, increase capacities of staff and grantees, promote and encourage innovation, address operational and programmatic challenges effectively, influence policy and scale up good practices.<sup>4</sup>

Strategic interventions that will be employed to improve knowledge management during OP7 is tabulated below.

**Table 4: Interventions for Knowledge Management**

Knowledge Management Systems	Interventions	Responsibility/Target group
Global Level	Showcase the success and lessons of minimum one project from Maldives SGP portfolio at the global digital library during OP7 ( <a href="http://sgp.undp.org">http://sgp.undp.org</a> )	NC and PA with the oversight of the NSC
	Engage in minimum 2 interactions with other members of Community Connect platform during one fiscal year <a href="http://data.communitiesconnect.net">http://data.communitiesconnect.net</a>	NC and PA
	Take part in international study tours, conferences and networking opportunities as available	NC and members of the NSC

<sup>4</sup> The objectives are taken directly from the KM technical guidance note for OP7.

National Level	Develop case studies, fact sheets, project profiles, photographs, videos and interviews on successful projects and maintain a knowledge repository.	NC and PA
	Conduct an one Grantee Networking Conference	NC and PA
	Conduct training workshops on different topics to support grant implementation	NC and PA
	Conduct one knowledge fair	NC and PA
	Organize study tours and site visits for SGP grantees	NC and PA
	Explore the possibility to tap into Maldives National University research grants to develop a research linking to the GEF SGP or one of the projects	NC and PA
	Develop minimum one journal article on the GEF SGP to be published in the MNU Journal of Research	NC
	Disseminate an electronic newsletter among all past and present Grantees and key stakeholders providing updates on progress, lessons	PA
	Formulate guidance manuals for new grantees on the focus areas to provide technical information to guide their implementation process	NC and PA
	Develop an annual policy brief to be submitted to the President's Office in ahead of the annual SAP review	NC and PA
Project Level	Participate in peer-to-peer exchanges	NC and PA to facilitate initially
	Assign mentor from past projects to ongoing grants	NC and PA to identify mentors and facilitate initial meeting
	Coordinate with line ministries/agencies/SOEs to secure training slots for SGP grantees to develop their capacity	NC and PA
	Maintain Facebook page for each grant to document progress	Grantee
	Develop at least one knowledge product per project. This can be a case study, photo exhibit, video, documentary, storytelling, Facebook page,	Grantee

	factsheet, human interest story, blog or any other creative medium in either English or Dhivehi	
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## 5. COMMUNICATION PLAN

Developing a clear and effective communications strategy to ensure meaningful engagement with key stakeholders and CSOs is vital for a country as geographically dispersed and disconnected as the Maldives. Communications efforts must therefore be strategic and customized to reach different target groups.

The Communications approach for OP7 will largely build on the Communications Strategy and Stakeholder Engagement Plan that is to be developed to facilitate GEF SGP implementation and outreach. This detailed strategy will articulate key messages that is in line with the SGP's global communication strategy and would identify the target audiences and the best mediums and approaches to reach them. Some strategies that could be considered in the Communications Strategy are:

- **Forming strategic partnerships with key government line ministries/agencies that work closely with the communities:** It is important to establish close working relationships with key government ministries and line offices that work closely with the communities. Specifically, the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Community Empowerment, the Ministry of Gender, Family and Social Security and the Ministry of Environment are identified as important partners to ensure success of the SGP and work towards shared goals.
- **Ensuring participation/representation in relevant committees/groups/platforms:** The NSC will identify important committees/groups/platforms that require GEF SGP representation. This is to ensure that the GEF SGP agenda is promoted and the vast practical experiences of 'local solutions' to national and global environmental problems are effectively communicated to relevant stakeholders and decision makers.
- **Conducting targeted visits to Regional Urban Centers:** To kick off OP7, the SGP will work with the MoYSCE to conduct workshops for NGOs in 3 atolls within the first year of implementation in line with the Government's SAP. Additional effort will be made to reach out to vulnerable groups (e.g. peripheral communities, people with disabilities) and hold separate visits with these groups.
- **Create a dedicated webpage for GEF SGP Maldives:** A dedicated webpage will be created and advertised through multiple mediums to showcase GEF SGP's work in the Maldives, knowledge products, training opportunities and partnership support.
- **Have a strong social media presence:** GEF SGP will strengthen its social media presence through establishing a dedicated Instagram page, Facebook page and twitter handle. Social media posts will be carried out at regular intervals showcasing stories of grantees and results.
- **Exploring different communication mediums to reach different groups of people:** During OP7, the SGP will explore different communication mediums to reach different target groups. These will include but not be limited to mass media including the Public Service Media (both television



and radio), online media outlets, community Viber groups, in-flight magazines, mass SMS sent through partnerships with telecom service providers, photo stories, video clips and blogs.

- **Use of champions and influencers:** GEF SGP will identify potential champions and influencers (both male and female) from the community to reach broader audiences.
- **Create an annual newsletter:** GEF SGP will issue a bi-annual newsletter that would be distributed among the stakeholders, grantees and partners. The objective of the newsletter will provide updates on ongoing projects, feature stories, share lessons, establish connections and attract potential private sector partners.

## 6. RESOURCE MOBILIZATION AND PARTNERSHIP PLAN

### 3.6. Secured and planned cash and in-kind co-financing

The GEF SGP country programme is among the largest sources of funding available for Maldivian civil society working on environmental related causes. However, unlike previous cycles, no additional sources of funding such as STAR Allocations, SIDS CBA or the Global Support Initiative for Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas (ICCA GSI) is expected for the 7<sup>th</sup> Operational Cycle. The funding for the Maldives component of the GEF SGP under OP7 will solely be from the GEF core funds.

Nonetheless, the following in-kind co-financing have been secured for OP7 at the country level. These partnerships and contributions are expected to create synergies between the SGP and national level efforts to address environmental concerns and contribute towards achieving the SDGs.

- Technical assistance extended by the Ministry of Environment and Environmental Protection Agency for grantees implementing projects on biodiversity, climate change, waste management, international waters and chemical management.
- Training and Development Opportunities provided by MoYSCE for grantees on leadership, project management, financial management, reporting, etc.
- Training opportunities provided by MoYSCE targeting women, youth and People with Disabilities.
- Technical assistance provided by MoGFSS to grantees in mainstreaming gender into project formulation and design
- Technical assistance provided by MoGFSS in reviewing project concepts, proposals, work plans and budget from a gender lens.
- Partnership extended by MoYSCE to host the CSO-Government-Private Sector Dialogue Platform as part of the National Environmental Symposium organized for June 2020.
- Technical assistance extended by the SDG Department of the Ministry of National Planning and Infrastructure to align GEF Small Grants Projects with the SDG outcomes.



- Technical assistance guaranteed by the Ministry of Fisheries, Marine Resources and Agriculture and the Maldives Marine Research Center on fisheries, aquaculture, agriculture and marine biology related projects.
- The SAP identifies establishment of Community Spaces and Cultural Centers in selected islands which would provide local NGOs/CSOs with working space.

### 3.7. Co-financing Opportunities

Since graduating to a middle-income country status in 2011, the Maldives have seen cutbacks in development assistance, UN budgetary support and bi-lateral donor funding. The political instability that was experienced over the past decade have also halted bilateral assistance to a certain extent. However, rapid changes in foreign policy brought forth by the current administration is extremely likely to change the bilateral donor funding landscape over the coming years.

A number of national level legislative and policy changes also presents co-financing opportunities for the SGP Country Programme. Chief among this includes the changes in fiscal decentralization which would come into effect in 2020. With the 8<sup>th</sup> Amendment of the Decentralization Act passed in December 2019, local councils will receive 5 percent of national reserves as block grants and will be eligible to a further 40 percent of all revenue generated from natural resources within that constituency. This significant increase in local council revenue comes with additional mandatory requirements and responsibilities for the local councils, of which includes environmental protection and sustainable use of natural resources. NGOs and CSOs within a given locality would serve as ideal delivery mechanisms for the execution of these funds.

Additional grants for environment and community development related areas have also been identified in the Government's Strategic Action Plan. These include the CSO Fund being implemented by the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Community Empowerment to disburse grants to the civil society for sustainable development activities aligned with national policies. Another potential co-financing source is the Grant Scheme administered by the Ministry of Arts, Culture and Heritage to support local artists and cultural practitioners which has committed MVR 2 million in funds to support local communities.

The SAP further includes an action to provide fiscal and non-fiscal incentives to CSOs (among others) to undertake programs to restore ecosystems such as reefs, forests and mangroves (Action 2.2.b of the Environmental Protection and Preservation Matrix). It further writes soft loans for mariculture entrepreneurs, loans and subsidy schemes for 1500 farmers (including 300 women) and loan assistance extended to fishermen. While these schemes will be executed through the SME Development Bank, these schemes present opportunities for further scaling up of demonstrative projects from the GEF SGP.

Commercial Banks in the Maldives are also a source of potential co-financing. The Bank of Maldives offer community grants of up to MVR 50,000 to fund CSO led projects in the areas of community development, education, environment and healthy lifestyles and sports. The Maldives Islamic Bank also maintains a *Sadaqat Fund* that provides co-financing support to community led initiatives which protects and promotes the rights of socially vulnerable groups, including women, children, youth and people with disabilities.

## 7. GRANTMAKER PLUS & PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

The Maldives NSC members (both past and present) can provide valuable technical support to communities and CSOs to develop proposals, access to knowledge products, networks and potential avenues for scale up and replication of projects. The NSC can play a significant role in facilitating the CSO-Government-Private Sector Dialogue through the planned National Environment Symposium. The Committee can also facilitate access to other technical experts in niche fields through their professional network.

The GEF SGP can also leverage its inhouse position within the UNDP Maldives Country Office to access various UNDP Platforms offered for communities. Chief among these, the Social Innovation Camp, Youth CoLab, Film for Change and Smart Cities initiative is identified. The Environment Portfolio of the UNDP CO also offers an ideal partnership opportunity for climate change and water related projects as well as all other projects that fall under UNDP's Strategic Plan and CPD. UNDP further undertakes numerous capacity development trainings, including leadership trainings, that can be utilized for grantee capacity development efforts.

## 8. RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

Early identification of possible risks will provide the country programme with a competitive advantage to avoid, address or deter any situation that may potentially delay, halt or lead to irreversible damage. The CPS will adopt the 'do not harm' approach similar to UNDP's Social and Environmental Screening Procedure. It will build on a human rights-based approach which will ensure that gender equality, empowerment and environmental sustainability is integrated into the project design and cycle. The NC will take lead responsibility in ensuring periodic review and update of the risk matrix in close consultation with the NSC. The NC will review the risk matrix minimum once every financial quarter. The risk matrix will be a live document that would require updating (both addition and removal) based on local context and new developments. It will further be reviewed annually and at AMR preparation.

*Table 5: Description of risks identified in OP7*

Describe identified risk	Degree of risk (low, medium, high)	Probability of risk (low, medium, high)	Risk mitigation measure foreseen
Environmental Risk	<u>Low</u> Given the small scale of the projects, it is unlikely they will have significant negative impact on the environment. However, certain projects may	Low	NSC and NC to ensure projects with potential environmental risk be altered at the project development stage and further directed to EIA

	require EIA clearance or expert guidance from technical experts from the relevant field		screening protocols as required
Social Risk	<p><u>Low - Medium</u> Targets on female led projects may lead to overburdening women causing them to be more vulnerable</p> <p><u>Low</u> There is risk of potential social conflict if certain groups within a given community do not successfully win a project</p>	Low - Medium	<p>Ensure support to women led projects throughout the cycle</p> <p>Consider potential synergies between project proposals to determine areas where two groups can collaborate (if required)</p>
Programme Risk:			
Implementation	<p><u>Low</u> The current management arrangement is expected to be sufficient to manage the country portfolio during OP7. However, monitoring may be difficult with fund limitations.</p>	Low	NC and NSC to ensure workplans and schedules are maintained, and project funds are timely disbursed.
Landscape approach	<p><u>Low</u> The CPS is continuing a singular landscape/seascape approach for OP7 as previous cycles.</p>	Low	Continue outreach activities with more focus on atolls, focal areas and groups that have not benefitted from the programme.
Replication	<p><u>Low</u> Risk of duplication is low given the representation of the NSC members from different partner Ministries.</p>	Low	Proactive communication linkages must be established with other Ministries/areas who are not represented in the NSC body
Financial Risk	<p><u>Low</u> Only the GEF SGP core funds have been confirmed for the Maldives. There will be no additional funding.</p> <p><u>Medium</u></p>	Medium	NSC and NC to optimize secured in-kind contributions, partnerships and potential co-finance opportunities.

	<p>Disbursement of funds may be slow due to internal procedures or weak financial administrative capacity on part of the councils. Certain groups (e.g. Women led groups) may not have own financial accounts leading to addition verifications and delays. Grantees may also not have the capacity to absorb funds in line with delivery schedule. There is potential likelihood of misusing funds by grantees.</p>		<p>Ensure that all grantees have valid bank accounts at the time of awarding.</p> <p>Continuous review of financial delivery against work plan and full review of payment receipts and financial reports before disbursement of tranches</p> <p>Verify past performance of grantees through background checks with councils and other means.</p>
Climate Risk	<p><u>Medium</u> Although drastic changes to the climate is unlikely during OP7, intensity and return periods of severe weather events and other annual events are likely to affect project implementation speed</p>	Medium	<p>Integrate climate projections and adaptative actions to project design.</p> <p>Consider potential climate related impacts to projects based on available climate data as well as human led actions that may exacerbate climate vulnerabilities in a given locality/habitat during the project appraisal stage.</p>
Capacity Risk	<p><u>High</u> The capacity of grantees is likely to be low in terms of technical knowledge of focal area, project design, implementation, financial management, monitoring and reporting</p>	High	<p>Review the Project Cycle Management Workshop to allow more time for training.</p> <p>Conduct a rapid capacity needs assessment of grantees.</p> <p>Conduct regular refresher trainings and extend continued technical support through mentors and partner Ministries.</p>
Political Risk	<p><u>Low - Medium</u> Political instability is unlikely to have significant impact on</p>	Low	<p>Continue to monitor political landscape of the country through regular</p>

	<p>project implementation; however, periods of political volatility is likely to be linked with slower implementation (e.g, during election periods)</p>		<p>interactions with the UN Resident Coordinator's Office.</p>
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## 9. MONITORING AND EVALUATION PLAN

### 9.1 Monitoring Approaches at Project and Country Levels

- **Setting the context based on global GEF-7 results architecture**

Strengthening the results framework and current monitoring and evaluation approaches will be given the highest priority during OP7. The objective of the M&E Plan will be to facilitate an understanding of the role of SGP in the Maldivian development context. It will help identify successful and unsuccessful approaches, determine interventions that can be replicated or scaled up, and facilitate adaptive management actions that can be taken at a country level.

Following the country evaluation and monitoring guidelines developed for GEF Small Grants Programme (UNDP and GEF 2019), the Maldives CPS will be guided by the following principles.

- Transparency and Accountability:** Quality reporting to all stakeholders
- Evidence based decision-making:** projects demonstrate timely and data driven decision making
- Enable continuous learning and improvement:** test assumptions, analyze risks, and understand drivers of success and failures
- Contribute to thought leadership:** generate country specific knowledge on pathways to achieve global environmental benefits and socio-economic benefits

The country programme will thus adopt an *Agile M&E approach* which will enable early identification and adaptive management needs for the projects. It is recognized that all projects will contribute to either one or more of the following; (i) development and implementation of local environmental solutions (products and services), (ii) community behavioural change (knowledge, attitude and practices) and (iii) building and harnessing community group action.



These drivers of change in turn contribute to either one of the broader results of the programme; (i) global environmental benefits, (ii) socio-economic benefits, (iii) being an incubator for innovation, (iv) capacity development and (v) broader adoption with scaling up, replication, mainstreaming of environmental gains and influencing policy with community voice.

- **M&E Plan for the Maldives CPS for OP7**

2020 will mark 10 years of GEF SGP in the Maldives. During OP7, the NSC will commission a detailed Impact Assessment Study to measure the success and failures of the programme throughout its history in the country. Through this evaluation, important results will be captured along with consequential lessons that can be used to improve future programming. This study will provide evidential support to the CSO-Government-Private Sector Dialogue Platform and subsequent input to the annual working sessions planned to review the Government's Strategic Action Plan. Prior to this assessment, the NSC will commission a study to determine the readiness of the country programme to conduct the impact assessment. This will be done either through a Readiness Assessment or taking an inventory of available data required for the said assessment.

The NC together with the NSC will further review the management arrangements of the GEF SGP in the country in light of the M&E plan outlined in this CPS to identify effective roles each party can take in M&E. This will include roles for the NC, NSC, Programme Assistant, UNDP and Ministry of Environment.

The country programme will give more emphasis for integration of M&E actions throughout the life cycle of the projects, from project development stage to project implementation and closure. In doing so, attention would be given to develop clear and measurable indicators that are also aligned with the country and global indicators. Emphasis will also be given to align indicators to match with targets set out in the Strategic Action Plan. Emphasis will further be given to ensure quality of data collected. The NSC will seek regional assistance to strengthen the quality of data collected, including methods of collection, compilation and analysis.

During OP7, the Project Cycle Management workshop methodology will be reviewed to provide more time and training to grantees to develop sound indicators and monitoring frameworks for their respective projects. Wherever possible, joint monitoring possibilities (for example within grantees working on same focal areas within a given atoll) would be identified. Attention would also be directed at designing project level indicators and targets that are gender sensitive. The NSC and NC would ensure all projects contain all mandatory indicators as required. At least two refresher training workshops on M&E and results reporting will be held within OP7 for all projects. The country programme will publish and distribute project management handbooks and relevant tools to support data collection and M&E work. Where required, the PCM workshop method and design would be altered to meet differentiated needs of vulnerable groups (e.g. the workshop times will be adjusted to meet timing of women with domestic/child care responsibilities, or will be hosted in a venue/setting that is accessible to people with disabilities).



The NC, in consultation with the NSC, UNDP and GEF regional oversight bodies will develop an annual monitoring schedule and will seek cost-sharing opportunities with relevant UN and Government partners. At least six monitoring visits will be conducted in a fiscal year. The NSC will explore possibilities of remote monitoring techniques, through support of local councils, Business Corporate Centers and other partners having on site presence in project islands.

The NSC will further ensure that project level data captured is stored, analyzed and communicated with all relevant stakeholders and partners. The NSC will consider inviting a M&E professional to the NSC on a periodical basis. The possibilities of developing student led monitoring and evaluation model will also be pursued through partnership with the Science Faculty of the Maldives National University.

The country programme will introduce and adopt innovative methods of monitoring and evaluation which will address challenges arising from geographical disparity. Project grantees will be requested to submit regular photos and videos of project sites which will be used to record data in addition to a quarterly report indicating progress made towards targets and other quantitative indicators as identified in their respective M&E plans. Training would also be given to project grantees to develop human interest stories, social media accounts, blogs and use online interactive tools (e.g. google sheets) to capture stories from their projects.

The Annual Country Programme Strategy Review and Annual Country Report will be produced accordingly and will provide detailed progress on the indicators and targets for the country programme. A Strategic Country Portfolio Review will be commissioned to an independent evaluator at the end of OP7.

**Table 6: Roles and Responsibilities of Grantees, NC and NSC in Monitoring and Evaluation Work over project life cycle**

Project Stage	Grantees	NC/PA	NSC
Proposal development stage	Identify ‘what’ the project is going to measure and ‘why’  Propose indicators.	Ensure that adequate training and guidance is given to develop	Ensure quality of indicators and linkages with national targets.
Project Commitment Stage	Jointly agree with the SGP country team on key indicators, monitoring frequency and method.	Jointly agree with the SGP grantee on key indicators, monitoring frequency and method.	Ensure quality of indicators and linkages with national targets.

Implementation Stage	<p>Ensure timely collection and maintenance of data.</p> <p>Ensure timely reporting.</p> <p>Maintain regular communication with the SGP team</p> <p>Active participation in the learning forums and workshops.</p>	<p>Monitor performance and regularly collect and maintain data.</p> <p>Undertake site visits and prepare monitoring reports.</p> <p>Promote learning amongst grantees through workshops/access to material</p> <p>Enter all project information into SGP database</p>	<p>Undertake site visits with NC/PA</p> <p>Work with NC/PA to guide project management</p>
Closure	<p>Ensure timely reporting with evidence backed data.</p>	<p>Aggregate project results and track progress against CPS targets</p>	<p>Support broader adoption of results and lessons</p>

- **Suggested indicators for OP7 Focal Areas**

#### Biodiversity

- Number/hectares of locally protected areas
- Number/hectares of reefs/mangroves/wetlands/seagrass under improved management regime
- Number/hectares of Community Conserved Areas
- Number of sustainably produced biodiversity and agrobiodiversity products
- Number of significant species with maintained or improved conservation status

#### Climate Change

- Number of projects working on renewable energy, energy efficiency, sustainable transport
- Percentage increase share in renewable energy in the island energy mix
- Number of diesel litres saved in electricity generation/transport
- Number of jobs created in renewable energy fields
- Percentage reduction in respiratory diseases (long term indicator)

- Number of households enjoying reductions in electricity charges

#### Land Degradation

- Area of degraded agricultural lands restored
- Number of community members with improved actions and practices on agriculture, land and water management
- Number of new or sustained farms adopting and demonstrating improved agriculture and agroecological practices
- Number of new or sustained farmer groups or networks advocating and disseminating improved agriculture approaches and practices
- Number of farmers applying technical knowledge gained from trainings on chemical free/organic farming
- Percentage of organic produce

#### Chemical and Waste Management

- Number of projects working on awareness/outreach on sustainable waste management
- Kilograms of pesticides/harmful chemicals avoided or reduced
- Volume of plastic waste minimization
- Percentage reduction in open burning

#### International Waters

- Volume of land-based pollutions (such as solid waste, wastewater, agricultural waste) that is avoided, reduced or prevented from entering water bodies
- Number of water management plans developed

#### Cross-cutting areas

- Has the project led to equal access to natural resources by men and women in the community? (yes/no)
- Percentage of women who believe that the project has improved participatory decision making of women in natural resource management in that community
- Number of projects led by women/or institutes mechanism for increased participation of women in decision making
- Proportion of male and female beneficiaries

- Number of projects where local traditional knowledge has been revived in sustainable environmental management initiatives
- Number of youths engaged in project activities
- Number of PwD organizations engaged as part of SGP interventions

**Table 7: M&E Plan at the Country Programme Level**

M&E Activity	Purpose	Responsible Parties	Budget Source	Timing
Country Programme Strategy elaboration	Framework for action including identification of community projects.	NC, NSC, country stakeholders, grantees	SGP planning grant	At start of OP7
As part of NSC meetings, ongoing review of project results and analysis. This includes an Annual CPS Review.	Assess effectiveness of projects, country portfolio; learning; adaptive management.	NC, NSC, UNDP Country Office. Final deliberations shared/ analyzed with CPMT colleagues.	Staff time, Country Operating Budget	Bi-annually to ensure OP7 is on track
Annual Monitoring Report Survey <sup>5</sup>	Enable efficient reporting to CPMT and GEF. It serves as the primary tools to record and analytically present results to donors.	NC/PA in close collaboration with NSC. CPMT provides technical guidance support and receives final country submission for further action.	Staff time	Once per year in June- July

<sup>5</sup> Timely and quality country level submissions to *Annual Monitoring Process* are mandatory. As a Global Programme, it enables aggregated reporting by CPMT to GEF, UNDP and other stakeholders.

Country Portfolio Review  (10-year impact assessment)	Methodological results capture of the portfolio at a given point to note impact level change as well as broader adoption. The goal is to support reporting to stakeholders, learning, and support to strategic development/ implementation of CPS.	NC, NSC	SGP planning grant	Within 2020
SGP Database	Ensure recording of all Project and Country Programme inputs in SGP database.	NCs, PAs,	Staff time	Throughout the operational phase. Data to be entered before May-June each year.
Audit	Ensure compliance with project implementation/ management standards and norms.	UNOPS / External Contractor. NC/ PA to provide requisite support.	Global Operating Budget	As informed by GEF

## 9.2 CPS Results Framework

*Table 8: Results Framework of SGP OP7 Country Programme Strategy*

<p><b>Alignment with SDGs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- SDG 1 – No Poverty</li><li>- SDG 7 – Affordable and Clean Energy</li><li>- SDG 9 – Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure</li><li>- SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities</li><li>- SDG 12 – Responsible Consumption and Production</li><li>- SDG 13 – Climate Action</li><li>- SDG 14 – Life Below Water</li><li>- SDG 15 – Life on Land</li><li>- SDG 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions</li></ul>
<p><b>Synergy with UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Output 1.3 – Frameworks and dialogue processes effectively and transparently engage civil society in national development</li><li>- Output 1.6 – National and subnational systems and institutions enabled to achieve structural transformation of productive capacities that are sustainable and employment and livelihoods intensive</li><li>- Output 2.1 – Effective institutional, legislative and policy frameworks in place to enhance the implementation of disaster and climate risk management measures at national and sub-national levels</li><li>- Output 2.2 – Mechanisms in place to assess natural and man-made risks at national and subnational levels</li><li>- Output 2.3 – Gender responsive disaster and climate risk management in integrated into development planning and budgetary frameworks of key sectors (e.g. water, agriculture, health and education)</li><li>- Output 2.4 – Scaled up action on climate change adaptation and mitigation across sectors funded and implemented</li></ul>

- Output 2.5 – Preparedness systems in place to effectively address the consequences of an response to natural hazards (geo-physical and climate related) and man-made crisis at all levels of government and community
- Output 2.6 – Inclusive sustainable solutions adopted to achieve increased energy efficiency and universal modern energy access (especially off grid renewable energy sources)
- Output 2.8 – Solutions developed at national and subnational levels for sustainable management of natural resources ecosystem services, chemicals and waste.

OP7 SGP Programme Goal: *Promote and support innovative, inclusive and impactful initiatives, and foster multi-stakeholder partnerships at the local level to tackle global environmental issues in priority landscapes and seascapes.*

1 OP7 SGP CPS Strategic Initiatives	2 OP7 CPS Indicators and Targets	3 Means of verification
<p><u>Strategic Initiative 1:</u></p> <p><i>Community-based conservation of threatened ecosystems and species</i></p> <p>i) Improve management effectiveness of protected areas through ICCAs and shared governance with private sector and government.</p> <p>ii) Improve community-led biodiversity friendly practices and approaches, including promoting blue economy (e.g. agriculture, fisheries, forestry, tourism, infrastructure, etc.)</p> <p>iii) Enhance community led actions for protection of threatened species</p>	<p><i>Number of mangroves/wetland ecosystems under improved management to benefit biodiversity (GEF core indicator 4.1)</i> Baseline: 0 Target: 5 mangrove/wetland systems or an area equivalent to 24 hectares</p> <p><i>Number of Marine protected areas under improved management effectiveness (GEF core indicator 2.2)</i> Baseline: 0 Target: 5</p> <p><i>Number of marine habitats such as reefs and seagrass meadows under improved practices to benefit biodiversity; excluding protected areas (GEF core indicator 5)</i> Baseline: 0 Target: 4 hectares</p> <p><i>Number of community-based protected area/ conserved area designations and/or networks established and operational</i> Baseline: 0 Target: at least 3 habitats are protected or conserved</p> <p><i>Number of natural habitats protected in each recipient atoll</i> Baseline: 0</p>	<p><i>Individual project reporting by SGP country teams (as part of midterm and final Progress reports)</i></p> <p><i>Baseline assessment comparison variables (use of conceptual models and partner data as appropriate)</i></p> <p><i>Annual Monitoring Report (AMR), SGP global database</i></p> <p><i>Country Programme Review</i></p> <p><i>SAP Annual Review Report</i></p> <p><i>Environmental Statistics maintained by EPA</i></p>

	<p><i>Target: at least one sandbank or one island or one wetland or one reef from each atoll</i></p>	
<p><b>Strategic Initiative 2:</b></p> <p><i>Sustainable agriculture and fisheries, and food security</i></p> <p>i) Increase efficiency and effectiveness of overall food production and value chain, including in vulnerable ecosystems</p> <p>ii) Increase diversification and livelihood improvement</p>	<p><i>Proportion of landscapes under sustainable land management in production systems (GEF core indicator 4.3)</i>  <i>Baseline: 0</i>  <i>Target: 2 hectares</i></p> <p><i>Number of agricultural lands restored (GEF core indicator 3.1)</i>  <i>Baseline: 0</i>  <i>Target: 10,000 sq. ft. (0.09 hectares)</i></p> <p><i>Number of projects supporting linkages and partnerships for sustainable food production practices (such as diversification and sustainable intensification) and supply chain management including in sustainable fisheries management</i>  <i>Baseline: 0</i>  <i>Target: 4</i></p>	<p><i>Individual project reporting by SGP country teams (as part of midterm and final Progress reports)</i></p> <p><i>Annual Monitoring Report (AMR), SGP global database</i></p> <p><i>Country Programme Review</i></p>
<p><b>Strategic Initiative 3:</b></p> <p><i>Low-carbon energy access co-benefits</i></p> <p>i) Promote renewable and energy efficient technologies providing socio-economic benefits and improving livelihoods.</p> <p>ii) Support implementation of Paris Agreement and the NDCs</p>	<p><i>Combined capacity of installed renewable energy from solar PV systems</i>  <i>Baseline: 0</i>  <i>Target: 100kW</i></p> <p><i>Number of projects that demonstrate community-oriented, locally adapted energy access solutions with successful demonstrations for scaling up and replication</i>  <i>Baseline: 0</i>  <i>Target: 10</i></p> <p><i>Number of households enjoy energy access, with co-benefits estimated and valued</i>  <i>Baseline: 0</i>  <i>Target: 250 households</i></p>	<p><i>Individual project reporting by SGP country teams (as part of midterm and final Progress reports)</i></p> <p><i>Annual Monitoring Report (AMR), SGP global database</i></p> <p><i>Country Programme Strategy Review (NSC inputs)</i></p>



	<p><i>Number of projects that focus on enhancement/restoration of forests</i> Baseline: 0 Target: 5</p> <p><i>Number of typologies of community-oriented, locally adapted energy access solutions with successful demonstrations or scaling up and replication</i> Baseline: 0 Target: 5 projects</p>	
<p><u>Strategic Initiative 4:</u></p> <p><i>Local to global coalitions for chemicals and waste management</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Promote plastics/solid waste management and circular economy</li> <li>ii) Reduce/remove use of chemicals in agriculture</li> </ul>	<p><i>Volume of Solid and liquid Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs), POPs containing materials and products removed or disposed (GEF core indicator 9.6)</i> Baseline: Target: 1 ton</p> <p><i>Number of local to global coalitions and networks established and/or strengthened (e.g. IPEN and Zero Mercury Working Group)</i> Baseline: 0 Target: 2</p> <p><i>Number of projects working on increasing awareness and outreach for sound chemicals, waste and mercury management.</i> Baseline: 0 Target: 5</p>	<p><i>Individual project reporting by SGP country teams (as part of midterm and final Progress reports)</i></p> <p><i>Strategic partnership with IPEN and Mercury GOLD country partners</i></p> <p><i>Annual Monitoring Report (AMR), global database</i></p> <p><i>Country Programme Review</i></p>
<p><u>Strategic Initiative 6:</u></p> <p><i>CSO-Government-Private Sector Policy and Planning Dialogue Platforms</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Promote/enhance community voices and participation in global and national policy, strategy development related to global environment and sustainable development issues</li> </ul>	<p><i>Number of high-level policy changes attributed to increased community representation through the CSO-government-private sector dialogues.</i> Baseline: 0 Target: 2</p> <p><i>Number of representatives from social inclusion group (women, youth, persons with disability, farmers, other marginalized groups) supported with</i></p>	<p><i>Individual project reporting by SGP country teams</i></p> <p><i>Annual Monitoring Report (AMR), global database</i></p> <p><i>Country Programme Review</i></p>

	<p><i>meaningful participation in dialogue platforms.</i>  <i>Baseline: 0</i>  <i>Target: 30% of representatives belong to a marginalized group</i></p> <p><i>Number of Public-Private Partnership on key global environmental issues established.</i>  <i>Baseline: 0</i>  <i>Target: 2</i></p>	
<p><u>Strategic Initiative 7:</u></p> <p><i>Enhancing social inclusion</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Promote targeted initiatives</li> <li>ii) Mainstream social inclusion in all projects</li> </ul>	<p><i>Number of participating community members (gender disaggregated) (Mandatory)</i>  <i>Baseline: TBC</i>  <i>Target: At least 50% of direct project beneficiaries are women (GEF Core Indicator 11)</i></p> <p><i>Number of projects that improve the participation and decision-making of women in natural resource governance</i>  <i>Baseline: 0</i>  <i>Target: 4 projects</i></p> <p><i>Number of projects that target socio-economic benefits and services for women</i>  <i>Baseline: 0</i>  <i>Target: 2 projects</i></p> <p><i>Number of projects that demonstrate appropriate models of engaging youth</i>  <i>Baseline: TBC</i>  <i>Target: 5 projects</i></p> <p><i>Number of projects that demonstrate models of engaging persons with disability</i>  <i>Baseline: 0</i>  <i>Target: 10%</i></p>	<p><i>Individual project reporting by SGP country teams</i></p> <p><i>Annual Monitoring Report (AMR), SGP global database</i></p> <p><i>Country Programme Review</i></p>

<p><i>Strategic Initiative 8:</i></p> <p><i>Monitoring and Evaluation and Knowledge Management</i></p> <p><i>Results Management, Monitoring &amp; Evaluation</i></p> <p><i>i) Administer new M&amp;E strategy in country programme and project design, implementation and overall decision making using participatory mechanisms</i></p> <p><i>Knowledge Management</i></p> <p><i>i) Capture knowledge and lessons from projects and activities</i></p> <p><i>ii) Improve capacities of CSOs/CBOs</i></p> <p><i>Conduct South-South Exchanges to promote technology transfer and replication of good practices</i></p>	<p><i>Percentage of projects which administer results management modalities in programme design, implementation and overall decision making using participatory mechanisms.</i>  <i>Baseline: 0</i>  <i>Target: 5 projects</i></p> <p><i>Frequency of updating SGP database for effective data collection, management and analysis supporting gains in programme performance and learning.</i>  <i>Baseline: none</i>  <i>Target: Quarterly updates</i></p> <p><i>Number of country/cross-country impact reviews undertaken that generate evidence of SGP impact and lessons learnt</i>  <i>Baseline: 0</i>  <i>Target: Impact readiness assessment / Data inventory exercise conducted</i></p> <p><i>Number of projects using citizen-based knowledge platform (digital library of community innovations) to document and curate community-based solutions to environment issues</i>  <i>Baseline: 0</i>  <i>Target: 3 projects</i></p> <p><i>Number of training sessions organized</i>  <i>Baseline: 0</i>  <i>Target: 1 per year</i></p> <p><i>Number of people whose capacities were improved</i>  <i>Baseline: 0</i>  <i>Target: 10 grantees report improved knowledge through self-assessments</i></p> <p><i>Number of Guidance Manuals developed</i>  <i>Baseline: 0</i>  <i>Target: at least 1 guidance manual developed</i></p> <p><i>Number of knowledge fairs held</i></p>	<p><i>Individual project reporting by SGP country teams</i></p> <p><i>Annual Monitoring Report (AMR), SGP global database</i></p> <p><i>Country Programme Review</i></p>
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	<p><i>Baseline: 0</i> <i>Target: 1 knowledge fair held</i></p> <p><i>Number of study tours conducted to demonstration sites</i> <i>Baseline: 0</i> <i>Target: 1</i></p> <p><i>Number of projects reporting adoption of improved practices or approaches as a result of South- South exchanges between communities, CSOs and other partners across countries.</i> <i>Baseline: 0</i> <i>Target: 1</i></p>	
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### 3. SIGNATURE OF NSC MEMBERS

#	Name	Conflict of Interest Statement <sup>2</sup>	Signature
1	Raniya Sobir / Independent Consultant	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I reiterate my acknowledgment and commitment to the SGP Conflict of Interest Statement.	
2	Mirza Mohamed or Midhath Rasheed / Ministry of Environment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I reiterate my acknowledgment and commitment to the SGP Conflict of Interest Statement.	
3	Dr. Aminath Shafiya Adam / Maldives National University	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I reiterate my acknowledgment and commitment to the SGP Conflict of Interest Statement.	
4	Hussain Simad / Small Island Research Group	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I reiterate my acknowledgment and commitment to the SGP Conflict of Interest Statement.	
5	Amila Adam / Vmedia	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I reiterate my acknowledgment and commitment to the SGP Conflict of Interest Statement.	
6	Moosa Zameer Hassan / Ministry of Housing & Urban Development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I reiterate my acknowledgment and commitment to the SGP Conflict of Interest Statement.	
7	Ibrahim Naeem / Environmental Protection Agency	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I reiterate my acknowledgment and commitment to the SGP Conflict of Interest Statement.	
8	Ahmed Shifaz / UNDP	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I reiterate my acknowledgment and commitment to the SGP Conflict of Interest Statement.	
9	Fathimath Shehezinee / Education for Community Empowerment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I reiterate my acknowledgment and commitment to the SGP Conflict of Interest Statement.	
10	Aishath Shooza / Gender and Disability Focal Point	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I reiterate my acknowledgment and commitment to the SGP Conflict of Interest Statement.	

<sup>2</sup> By checking the "Conflict of Interest Box" the NSC Member reiterates his/her acknowledgment and commitment to the "SGP NSC Conflict of Interest Statement", in which the following declaration is made:

"1. I am aware when my private or professional interests i.e. responsibilities outside the SGP NSC interfere or may be perceived to interfere with SGP matters; and to avoid this conflict of interest; I would, therefore, ensure to place the SGP NSC interest above my own;

2. My participation in the NSC is impartial, and without prejudice;

3. Because of SGP's zero tolerance policy on acceptance of gift and hospitality; I would refrain from any acceptance of the aforementioned; and

4. I am aware that my participation in the NSC is on a voluntary basis; and understand that there is no compensation for my services to the NSC."



**ANNEX 1 - GUIDELINES FOR THE NATIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE AND NATIONAL COORDINATOR TO ENSURE GENDER MAINSTREAMING AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN THE GEF SGP**

Project Conception Stage	
	Ensure Call for Proposals are communicated through multiple channels to guarantee broader outreach to different groups of people
	Employ special calls for women-led projects at a frequency determined by the NSC
	Accept project proposals in Dhivehi and oral formats through participatory video proposals to encourage maximum participation by women and vulnerable groups.
	Produce a checklist/guidance note in both English and Dhivehi to guide interested parties to include interventions on gender equality and inclusivity
	Encourage women led stand-alone projects in line with GEF focal areas
Project Management Workshops and Project Development Stage	
	Encourage equal participation of male and female participants in Project Management Workshops
	Ensure that Project Proposal Templates have a section dedicated for a gender analysis
	Bring in a gender expert to guide participants to conduct a gender analysis for their respective projects
	Refer to guidance tool when supporting grantees in carrying out gender analysis during project development (refer to Annex 2)
	Identify and adopt a gender mainstreaming in project management guideline. Integrate guideline into project management workshops
	Conduct a needs assessment at the project development phase to define the roles of men and women early on in the project cycle. <i>Who will play what role? How can project benefits like jobs or trainings be shared equally? What might be possible conflicts and how can the project address them?</i>
	Ensure women and men in the target community participate in the project development phase through consultative processes
	Encourage participants to collect and use gender disaggregated data in their analysis and project design
	Encourage use of at least one gender related indicator for each project
Project Approval Stage	
	Ensure that Gender is one of the main criteria considered for the approval of grants.
	Employ a checklist and criteria to assess and screen projects for gender mainstreaming
	Refer to the NSC Project Review Sheet in all NSC meetings for project approval
	Refer to potential interventions identified in the GEF Gender Strategy and Action Plan (refer to Annex 3)
Project Implementation Stage	
	Encourage both males and females to participate in project implementation
	Extend targeted support to grantees (capacity building, trainings, networking opportunities, peer to peer learning, access to resources, mentoring support etc)
	Extend proactive support for female led projects as necessary



	Identify and facilitate female grantees to participate in the global peer-learning network
	Ensure field evaluation, including monitoring and evaluation and participatory appraisals, incorporates gender-based indicators to track the status of gender mainstreaming in projects
	<b>General Guidelines for NSC and NC</b>
	Ensure that the NSC has a Gender Focal Point who has relevant expertise in the field
	Enforce all SGP Staff and NSC Gender Focal Point to undertake the mandatory e-course on gender and environment
	Conduct regular gender sensitization training for all NSC members at least once a year
	Ensure that the NC participates in relevant gender-focused training and sensitization workshops at the regional level and for grantees at the national level.
	Encourage women led stand-alone projects in line with the GEF focal areas
	Document the contribution of women to project activities in key areas where women already figure prominently (e.g., biodiversity management, in situ conservation of agrobiodiversity, conservation of medicinal plants, etc.)
	Assess the performance of National Coordinators with respect to results achieved in promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment
	Carry out a midterm evaluation of OP7 CPS from a gender lens
	Contribute to knowledge management by capturing knowledge, distilling good practices and lessons learned
	Facilitate partnerships and networking by connecting women groups with regional and global networks, and by connecting them with other key stakeholders





**ANNEX 2 – GUIDELINE T NSC AND NC TO FACILITATE GRANTEES TO CARRY OUT A GENDER ANALYSIS (SOURCE: GENDER TECHNICAL GUIDANCE NOTE- OP7 FOR THE PERIOD 2019 –2023)**

**What is the context?**

To understand the legal rights and status; the status of women and gender relations in the local and national context and project substantive technical area; relevant background information.

*Guiding questions:*

- What is the legal status of women in the country of intervention?
- How are women and men regarded and treated by customary and formal legal codes and the judiciary system (this includes an assessment of state issued documentation such as identification cards, voter registration, and property titles, the right to land, inheritance, employment, atonement of wrongs, and legal representation)?
- What are the gender norms and values?
- What are commonly held beliefs, perceptions and stereotypes relating to gender?
- Are there differences between women and men in the local context in terms of rights, resources, participation, and gender-related mores and customs?
- Identify and analyze any additional issues related to the context of specific areas of work and types of interventions, outcomes and impacts related to the proposed project.

**Who does what?**

To understand time use, gendered division of labour and patterns of decision-making. This information examines the implications that gender differences have on time commitments and in turn the effect on poverty and work-life balance and acknowledges the division of productive and reproductive work. We can infer how this determines the contribution of men and women to the welfare of the family, community, and society.

*Guiding questions:*

- What is the division of labour among women and men? How do women and men spend their time throughout the day, week, month, and/or year, and during the seasons? Identify and analyze any additional issues related to who does what in the specific areas of work and types of intervention related to the project.
- What is the participation of women and men in the formal and informal economy?
- Who makes decisions and manages household time and resources?
- Who takes responsibility for the care of children and the elderly?
- Are there certain tasks that only women or men are expected to perform?
- Are there shifts in the household division of labour? Are these shifts shared equitably?
- Discuss the gendered division of labour relevant to the project's interventions including how the gendered division of labour and patterns of decision-making effect the project, and vice versa how the project could affect the gendered division of labour and decision-making.

**Who has access and controls what?**

To understand activities surrounding access to control over resources. It includes a perception of gender differentials of access to and control over resources, income, time, technologies and services. In addition, it helps us identify who has the better means to opportunities.



*Guiding questions:*

- Who has access to and control over resources?
- Do women and men benefit equally from resources and are women and men likely to benefit equally from the resources, products or activities proposed by the project during its different phases?
- Identify who benefits from opportunities, for example in regard to land, livestock, financial services, health and education, employment, information and communication. What are the barriers and opportunities in relation to mobility, as well as in access to services?
- What barriers men and women face in accessing quality services that are accountable, transparent and responsive to their needs and interests? Identify and analyze any additional issues related to meaningful access, participation and control in the specific areas of proposed project work/types of interventions.

**Who decides?**

To understand power and decision-making; women's priorities, restraints and motivations. This set of information refers to people's ability to decide, influence, control, and enforce individual and governmental power.

*Guiding questions:*

- Who participates in the decision-making in the household, the public sector and the private sector?
- Are the bargaining positions of women and men different?
- Are women involved in making economic decisions?
- What are the decision-making structures related to the proposed project?
- Who is likely to participate in the proposed decision-making structures at the different levels or phases of the project?
- What are women's and men's capacities to make decisions freely, and to exercise power over one's body, whether in one's household, community, municipality, and state.
- In what kinds of decisions do women in the household participate? Or which ones do they decide on their own (household management, schooling for children, family decision-making, family planning, etc.)?
- In what avenues or strategies do women engage to influence household decisions? What barriers do women and other vulnerable social groups face in meeting their practical needs and interests? Identify and analyze any additional issues related to decision-making in the specific areas of work and types of intervention related to the project. What are women's and men's capacities to make decisions freely, and to exercise power over one's body, whether in one's household, community, municipality, and state.
- In what kinds of decisions do women in the household participate? Or which ones do they decide on their own (household management, schooling for children, family decision-making, family planning, etc.)?
- In what avenues or strategies do women engage to influence household decisions? What barriers do women and other vulnerable social groups face in meeting their practical needs and interests? Identify and analyze any additional issues related to decision-making in the specific areas of work and types of intervention related to the project.



**Who knows what?**

To understand capacity needs, skills, knowledge level and the value associated women's and men's knowledge and capacity. This can help identify practical and strategic needs and constraints related to knowledge and capacity.

*Guiding questions:*

- What are the training, education and literacy levels of women, men and other social groups in relation to the proposed project?
- Do women and men have equal access to education, technical knowledge and/or skill upgrading?
- Do men and women have different skills and capacities and face different constraints?
- What is the value associated with women's and men's respective knowledge and skills?
- Are women's or men's knowledge or skills in specific areas valued differently?
- Identify and analyze any additional issues related to knowledge and capacity in the specific areas of work and types of intervention related to the project.



### ANNEX 3 – POTENTIAL INTERVENTIONS IDENTIFIED IN GEF GENDER STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

The following areas have been extracted from the GEF Gender Strategy and Action Plan to guide the NSC and NC in identifying and ensuring gender mainstreaming within the SGP cycle

- **Supporting women’s improved access, use, and control of resources, including land, water, forest, and fisheries by:** (i) contributing to shape policy and gender norms to improve women’s access to and control over land, water, forests and other natural resources; (ii) providing targeted support to raise awareness and assist women in exercising their legal rights; and (iii); enhancing women’s decision-making capabilities regarding land, forests, water and other biological resources they use.
- **Enhancing women’s participation and role in natural resources decision-making processes, with women as agents of change at all levels by:** (i) promoting women’s equal engagement in community, rural and urban planning processes; (ii) promoting women’s voice in decision-making and policy in global and national planning and decision-making bodies; (iii) supporting women’s engagement in producer organizations, cooperatives, labor unions, outgrow schemes etc.; (vi) promoting women’s voice (including indigenous peoples and local community groups) in partnerships and alliances with regional and national networks; and (v) providing policy level training opportunities to help women participate in decision-making forums.
- **Targeting women as specific beneficiaries by** (i) increasing awareness of the roles of women and men in the sustainable management and use of natural resources; (ii) creating opportunities from (alternative) sustainable livelihoods and income-generation opportunities such as conservation, rehabilitation and restoration actions for women; (iii) engaging women in processes for making commodities and supply chains more sustainable; (vi) supporting clean technology and energy solutions that also offer women the possibility to reduce their environmental footprint and start new businesses; and (v) supporting women entrepreneurs, and activities that offer women access to credit and finance.
- **Investing in women’s skills and capacity by** (i) supporting capacity development of different groups, including communities, women’s organizations, and government officials at the national and subnational levels to capitalize on the complementary roles of women and men and mobilize people for collective action in forest regeneration, biodiversity conservation, and watershed protection; and (ii) providing full and timely access to knowledge and information.



**ANNEX 4 - BASELINE ASSESSMENT (ATTACHED)**

# BASELINE ASSESSMENT REPORT

Prepared for the Global Environmental Facility's 7<sup>th</sup> Operational Cycle in the Maldives



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## Acronyms & Abbreviations

<b>BCC</b>	Business Center Corporation Ltd
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organization
<b>EPA</b>	Environment Protection Agency
<b>GEF</b>	Global Environmental Facility
<b>GHG</b>	Greenhouse Gas
<b>HIES</b>	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
<b>IWMC</b>	Island Waste Management Center
<b>RSW</b>	Refrigerated Sea Water
<b>SDFC</b>	SME Development Financing Corporation
<b>MEE</b>	Ministry of Environment and Energy
<b>MoFMRA</b>	Ministry of Fisheries, Marine Resources and Agriculture
<b>MoH</b>	Ministry of Health
<b>MoHAHE</b>	Ministry of Home Affairs, Housing and Environment
<b>MoYSCE</b>	Ministry of Youth, Sports and Community Empowerment
<b>MSL</b>	Mean Sea Level
<b>MT</b>	Metric Tonnes
<b>MVR</b>	Maldivian Rufiyaa
<b>MW</b>	Mega Watt
<b>NBSAP</b>	National Biodiversity Strategic Action Plan
<b>NBS</b>	National Bureau of Statistics
<b>NDC</b>	National Determined Contribution
<b>NEET</b>	Not in Education, Employment or Training
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>NOAA</b>	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
<b>OP7</b>	7 <sup>th</sup> Operational Cycle
<b>SAP</b>	Strategic Action Plan
<b>SGP</b>	Small Grant Programme
<b>Sq. Km</b>	Square Kilometre
<b>SOE</b>	State of Environment
<b>SST</b>	Sea Surface Temperature
<b>UNFCCC</b>	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Program

# 1. Introduction

The Global Environmental Facility (GEF) was formulated with the aim of addressing key global environmental threats through community led initiatives. Initiated at the historic Earth Summit held in Rio De Janeiro, the programme has supported over 4,700 community led projects in 170 countries.<sup>1</sup> The Maldives became an official member of GEF in 1994.

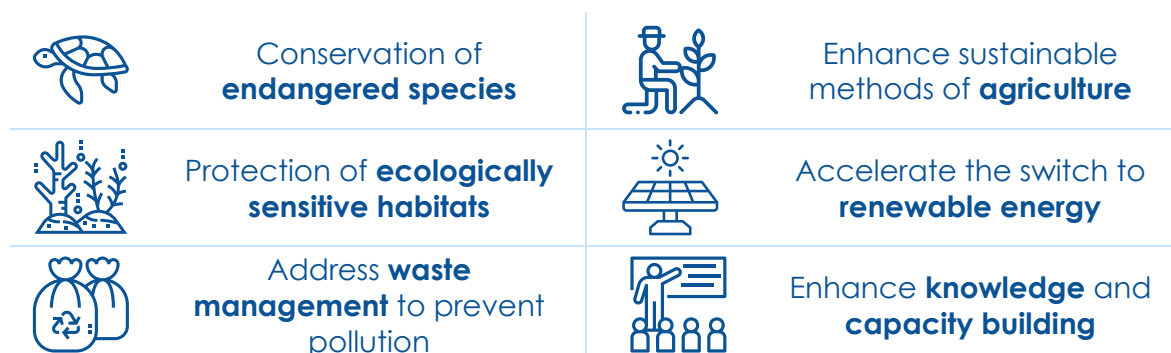


Figure 1: Objectives of SGP

The GEF programme has been supporting local grassroot initiatives in the Maldives since 2010 during the 4<sup>th</sup> Operational Cycle of the global grant scheme. The main objectives of the programme is to (i) facilitate conservation of endangered species including marine turtles and sea birds while promoting protection of ecologically sensitive habitats such as beaches, mangroves and coral reefs, (ii) address waste management on islands in an attempt to prevent pollution and degradation of the aforementioned sensitive habitats, (iii) enhancing chemical free, organic and sustainable methods of agriculture, (iv) accelerating the switch to renewable energy and (v) enhancing education, awareness and capacity building of civil society and communities in areas aligning with GEF priorities.

Throughout the GEF SGP, the Maldives has initiated over 77 community level projects over three operational cycles. A notable majority of these projects have concentrated on biodiversity conservation and climate change (53%). Analysis of spatial distribution of the projects show that the highest number of projects were led by NGOs based in Male' and had a national focus. Three atolls, *Meemu*, *Vaavu* and *Dhaalu*, have not received any GEF grants to date due to various reasons.

<sup>1</sup> GEF (2019), About us, <https://www.thegef.org/about-us>

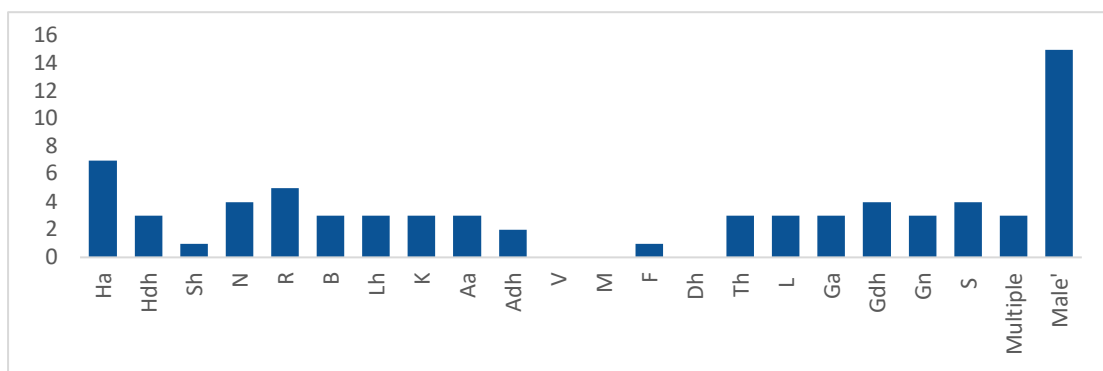


Figure 2: Geographic Distribution of GEF SGP in Maldives, OP 4 – 6

### Objectives of the baseline assessment

The principal objective of this baseline assessment report is to accurately deliver a snapshot of current environmental status and trajectories while determining the overall status of socially vulnerable groups within the Maldivian community.

The findings of this assessment will serve the dual purpose of identifying potential landscape/seascape for the 7<sup>th</sup> Operational Cycle of the GEF SGP in the Maldives and distil the key priority areas on which grants will be awarded over the next four years. This will be detailed out in the Country Programme Strategy that accompanies this assessment.

### Structure of the report

This report will be structured as follows. A concise overview of GEF and the GEF SGP will be provided at the introduction. The methods employed to develop the baseline will be provided next, followed by a contextual overview of the Maldives. This will be followed by a section on environmental observations and trends, followed by a similar section for socially vulnerable groups. The legislative framework will follow these sections to guide the reader on relevant legislative changes that is of interest to the GEF SGP. The National policy directives and priorities will be included as the final section of the report.

## 2. Methods

The methods employed in developing this baseline are outlined below.



**Conducting a review of available grey literature:** These included a desk review of relevant government and international donor organization reports, policy documents, selected (and available) journal articles, published statistics and media reports. This process helped identify the current status of the environment and that of socially vulnerable groups and helped distil key data and information which can be used to formulate the baseline document.



**Consultation with relevant stakeholders:** A series of meetings were held with relevant stakeholders including government ministries, State Owned Enterprises, the United Nations and key players in the Maldives financing landscape. The consultative process aided the understanding of the 'why' behind the data identified in the previous step. It further helped gather insights into the future direction of these organizations in terms of plans, priorities and areas of potential collaboration with GEF SGP (See list of consulted stakeholders and summary of discussions under Annex 1).



**Consultation with Grantees:** Randomly selected sample of grantees from the past three operational cycles were identified for mobile phone consultations. Though randomly selected, emphasis was given to ensure a fair representation of female and male led projects and to get the viewpoints of both successful and unsuccessful projects. The objective of these calls was to identify the type of challenges facing community-based NGO's in accessing and implementing projects and to identify the lessons that can be taken for future project cycles. Consent were obtained from the grantees prior to asking the questions. The responses were computed into an excel sheet for easier analysis.

### 3. Contextualising the Maldives

The Maldives is an Indian Ocean archipelago comprised of 1,900 small coral islands scattered between the geographic coordinates 7°6'35" N to 0°42'24" S and 72°32'19" E to 73°46'13" W.<sup>2</sup> The total area of the country is 115,300 sq. km and 99 percent of this area is ocean. The islands are naturally clustered into 26 atolls but is administratively divided into 20 atolls. Of the 1,900 islands, 187 are inhabited, 30 are used for industrial purposes, 52 for agriculture, 13 for fisheries related work, 10 for aquaculture and 153 (with an additional 201 being developed) for tourism.<sup>3</sup>

Physical characteristics of the islands vary among the islands. Islands in the north are mostly surrounded by patch reefs and faros with shallow lagoons (40 – 50 m) while southern atolls have closed reefs and deeper lagoons (70 – 80 m).<sup>4</sup> Islands can take form of either a sandbank to elongated islands or as circular ones, located either on the atoll ridge or within the lagoon. The location and physical characteristics of each island greatly determine their susceptibility to natural hazards, erosion and accretion and availability of natural resources (e.g. mangroves, abundance and quality of groundwater). Over 80 percent of the land area is less than 1 meter above mean sea level making the Maldives the flattest country on earth.<sup>5</sup>

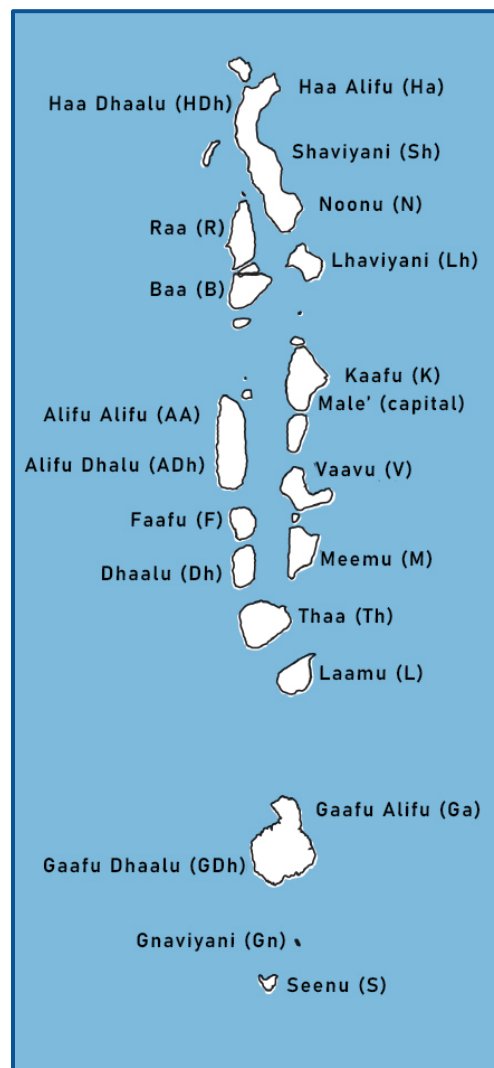
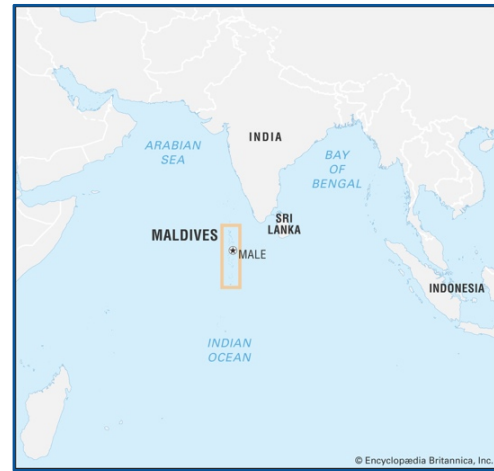


Figure 3: Map of Maldives

<sup>2</sup> MEE (2016a), Second National Communication of the Maldives to UNFCCC

<sup>3</sup> President's Office (2019), *Isles*, <https://isles.gov.mv>

<sup>4</sup> MEE (2016a), Second National Communication of the Maldives to UNFCCC

<sup>5</sup> MEE (2016b), State of the Environment Report

The main ecosystems found in the country includes forest areas, coastal vegetation area, mangroves and wetland systems, beaches, seagrass meadows and coral reefs. These ecosystems are interconnected and provides important ecosystem services to each other and to the people.

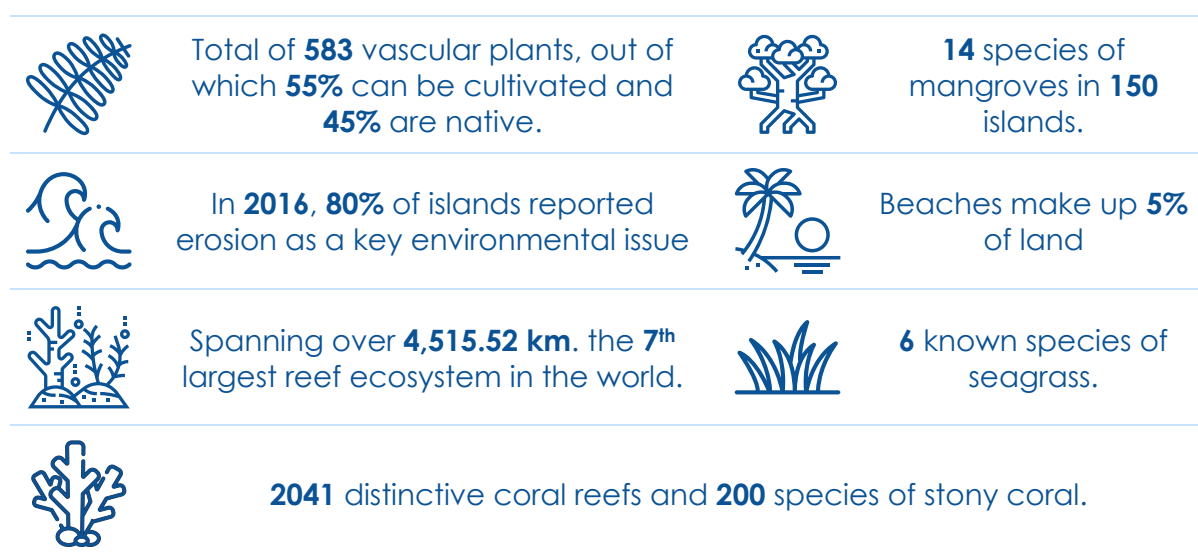


Figure 4: Main Ecosystems in Maldives

Terrestrial vegetation is limited subjective to the geographic formation of the islands and biophysical characteristics. A total of 583 vascular plants of which 55 percent can be cultivated and 45 percent native have been identified.<sup>6</sup> Coastal vegetation in particular provides important shoreline protection against strong winds and erosion while controlling saltwater infiltration to the aquifers. Mangroves are found in 150 islands in either enclosed or semi-enclosed forms, featuring 14 species (varied across the islands and regions), and representing a total area of 7.19 sq. km.<sup>7</sup> Beaches make 5 percent of the total land area and holds significant economic, social and cultural value to the Maldivian people.<sup>8</sup> Erosion, though a natural process, is a significant issue that have been exacerbated through climate change related fluctuations and human induced modifications to the natural environment. In 2016, 80 percent of the islands reported erosion as a key environmental concern.<sup>9</sup> There is very limited understanding and scientific research on seagrass meadows of the Maldives. However, six species of seagrass are known to be found in the Maldives of which *Thalassia Hemprichii* is the most common.<sup>10</sup> Adjacent to most seagrass meadows are interconnecting coral reef systems. The total reef area in the Maldives is 4,515.14 sq.

<sup>6</sup> MEE (2016a), Second National Communication of the Maldives to UNFCCC

<sup>7</sup> MEE (2016a), Second National Communication of the Maldives to UNFCCC & MEE (2016b), State of the Environment Report

<sup>8</sup> MEE (2016b), State of the Environment Report

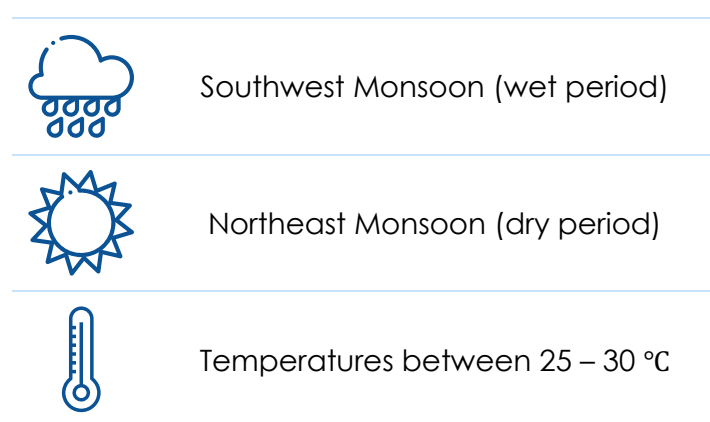
<sup>9</sup> Ibid

<sup>10</sup> Maldives Underwater Initiative.

<http://www.maldivesresilientreefs.com/campaigns/seagrass/resources/>

km.<sup>11</sup> Approximately 2,041 distinctive coral reefs and 200 species of stony corals have been mapped in the Maldives.<sup>12</sup> These reefs are the 7<sup>th</sup> largest reef ecosystem in the world.<sup>13</sup>

The Maldives, being located on the equator, experiences tropical monsoon climate. There are two distinct monsoon periods; the southwest monsoon or the 'wet period' extending from mid-May to November and the northeast monsoon or the 'dry period' spreading from January to March.<sup>14</sup> Temperature varies between 25 to 30 degree Celsius whereby the warmer months falls immediately following the dry period during March, April and May. Many islands run out of rainwater stocks during this period. Precipitation also varies with the monsoons. Northern atolls receive less rainfall than southern atolls. An average 2,218 mm of rain were observed in southern atolls per year as opposed to 1,779 mm in northern atolls (per annum) over a 20-year period.<sup>15</sup>



*Figure 5: Climate of Maldives*

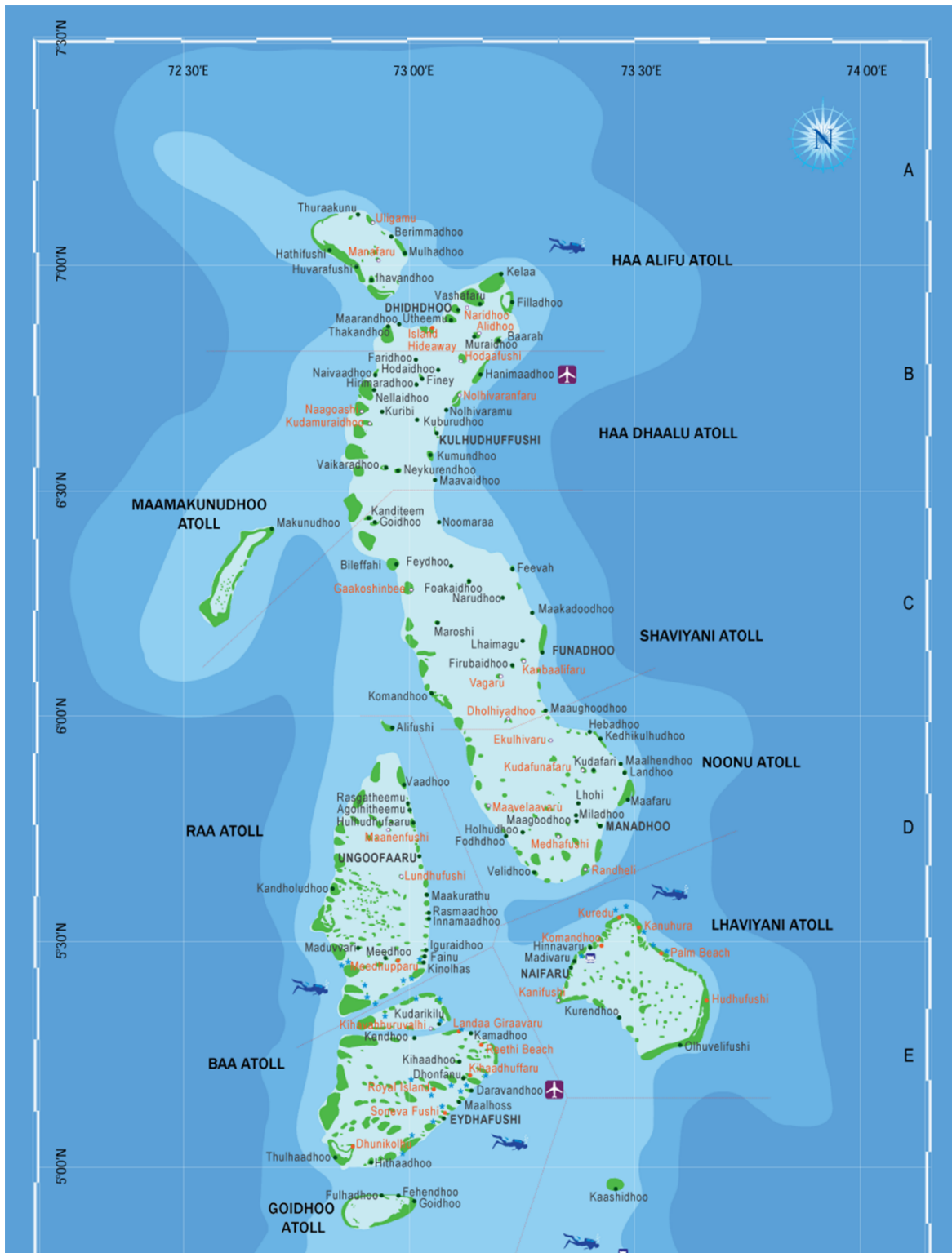
<sup>11</sup> MEE (2016c) NBSAP 2016-2025

<sup>12</sup> Ibid

<sup>13</sup> Ibid

<sup>14</sup> MEE (2016a), Second National Communication of the Maldives to UNFCCC

<sup>15</sup> Ibid







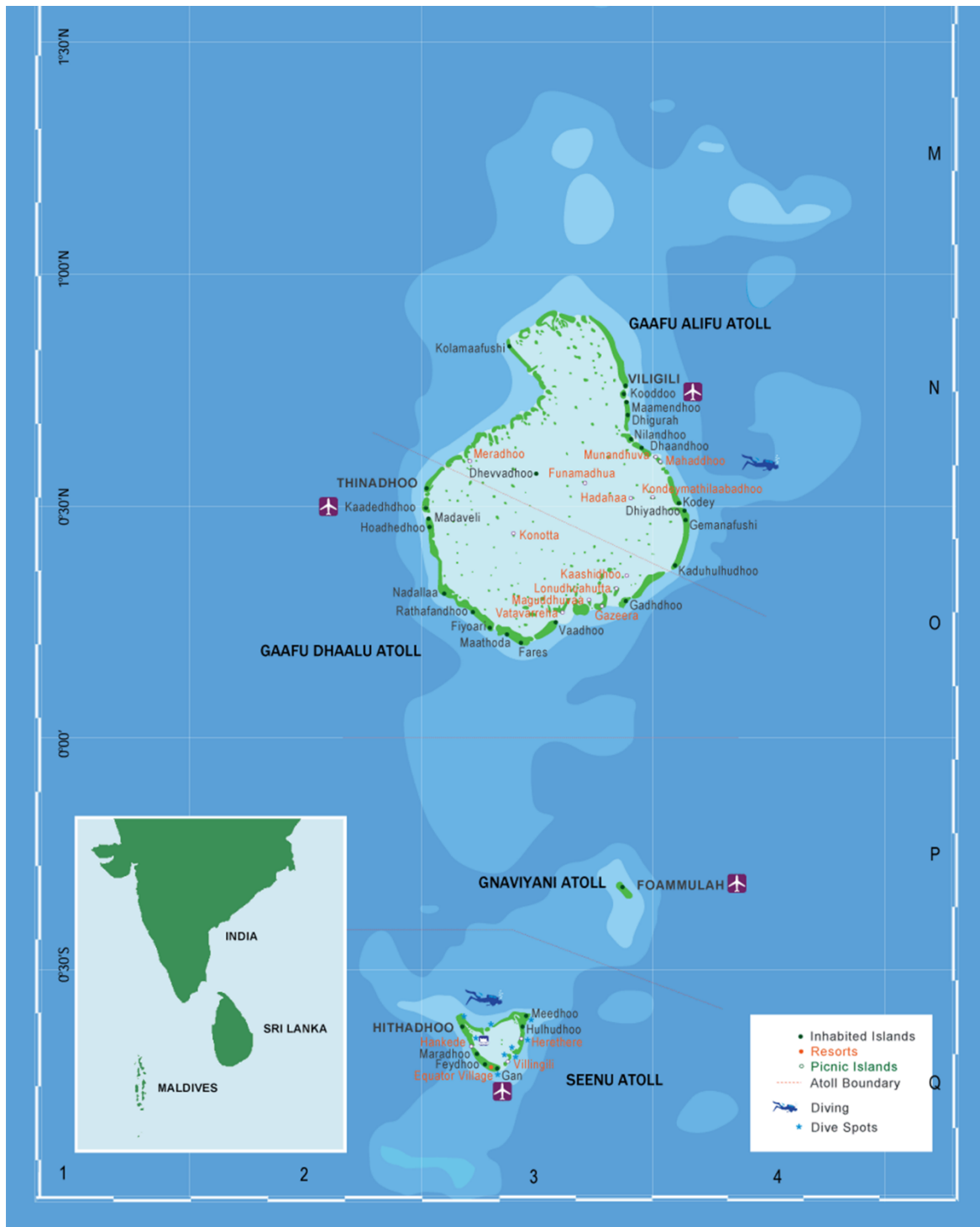


Figure 6: Map of Maldives (2)

## 4. The status of the Environment – and how it is changing

**Climate change remains the top threat to global development. While the science confirms an inevitable harsh future, nothing is certain, as no one knows what a warmer world would look like.** Climate change has been described as one of the two seismic drivers of inequality shaping the 21<sup>st</sup> century apart from technological transformation.<sup>16</sup> As global warming continues to accelerate the future of small island states that are least responsible for greenhouse gas emissions remains highly uncertain and bleak. The convoluted nature of climate change is undisputed in the scientific community with overwhelming global evidence of rapid, unprecedented changes in the atmosphere and natural environment compared to pre-industrial measures. Nevertheless, the science of 'loss' remains uncertain, as is the extent to which adaptation is possible in an island state context, unless there is significant investment and technology directed towards these groups by developed nations.<sup>17</sup> While, global commitment to address climate change is inconsistent between countries, the historic Paris Agreement offers some hope to curb global greenhouse gas emissions. However, implementation is uneven, slow and voluntary and the effectiveness of this global instrument remains to be determined over time. Added to this, rapid technological transformation imposes the threat of leaving entire groups of people behind (like women) or even countries, especially if unable to meet financial, systematic or technical requirements.<sup>18</sup>

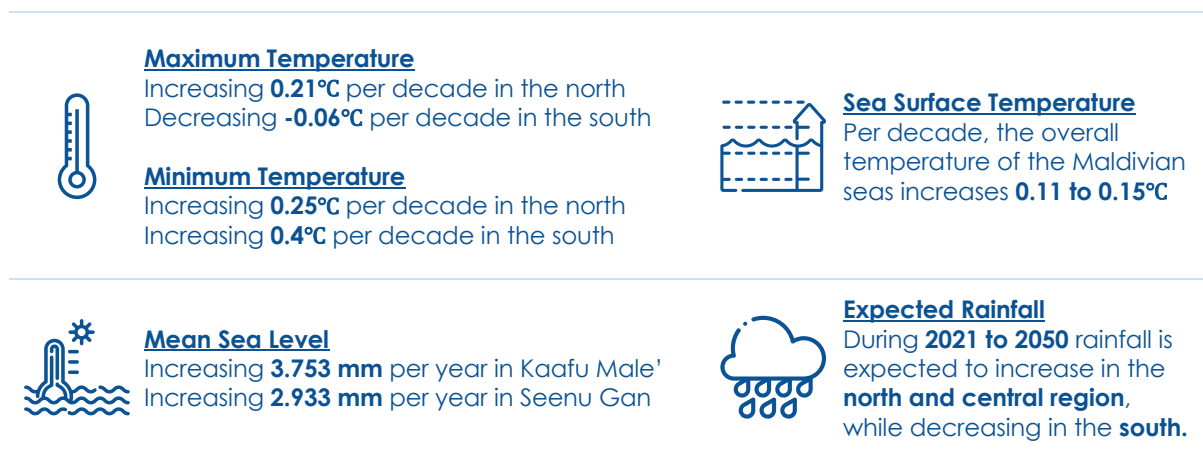


Figure 7: Temperature and Rain Variations

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<sup>16</sup> UNDP (2019), Human Development Report

<sup>17</sup> Barnett (2017), The dilemmas of normalizing losses from climate change: Towards hope for Pacific atoll countries

<sup>18</sup> UNDP (2019), Human Development Report

**The Maldives remains extremely fragile to climate change as global warming increases the likelihood of an uncertain future.**<sup>19</sup> Changes in global climate exacerbates existing vulnerability for Maldivians, be it in relation to food and water security, access to energy, livelihood, human health and the very existence of the nation. Assessment of maximum temperature measured from northern, central and southern stations shows an increasing trend in temperature (0.21° C/decade) in the northern parts of the country, and a decreasing trend for the southern regions (of – 0.06° C/decade). For minimum temperatures, an increasing trend of 0.25° C/decade in the north while a steep increase of 0.4° C/decade is observed for the southern region.<sup>20</sup> This increase in temperature will simultaneously affect food, fuel and water security and would have devastating impact on coral reefs and associated livelihoods. Adding to this, available data indicate a rise in Mean Sea Level (MSL) of 3.753 mm and 2.933 mm per year in Male' and Gan respectively. Sea Surface Temperatures (SST), according to satellite data obtained from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) depicts an increasing trend in temperature across all regions of the country, with the northern seas of the country likely to be slightly less warm than the rest. A general trend of 0.11 to 0.15°C per decade is observed. Further, rainfall is expected to increase over northern and central regions while decreasing in southern regions for the years 2021 and 2050. Based on these projections, the only certainty is that the natural environment *will take new shape*, and the Maldives must find new and innovative ways to adapt.



Maldives' Nationally Determined Contribution commits to **reduce GHG emissions by 10% by 2030.**



**1998 El-Nino** event resulted in over **90%** mortality of corals in sampled sites. **2015-2016 El-Nino** event affected **73%** of all surveyed coral reefs.



Average **rainfall** per year over **20 years'**

South: **2218 mm**  
 Central: **1966 mm**  
 North: **1799 mm**

Figure 8: Climate Change, Related Action and Impact

<sup>19</sup> References to this section is made to "MEE (2016). Second National Communication of Maldives to UNFCCC"

**The Maldives continues to be committed in the plight against climate change, however a “business as usual” approach will no longer be sufficient.** Despite being responsible for 0.003 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions, the Maldives, as evident from the above, is among the forefront countries vulnerable to climate change.<sup>21</sup> The Country’s Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) commits to unconditionally reduce its GHG emissions by 10 percent by the year 2030 and further communicated a conditional reduction of up to 24 percent.<sup>22</sup> With the energy, transport and waste sectors being identified as the key focus sectors for mitigation, any national or local level intervention and program such as the GEF SGP must align with such international commitments, while keeping in mind that a ‘business as usual’ approach will simply be insufficient to effectively address adaptation and mitigation actions that are urgently required for the country.

**The main economic sectors – tourism and fisheries – relies heavily on the coral reefs, and a rapidly warming planet puts them at significant risk.** The 2015-2016 El-Nino episodes resulted in high variations in sea surface temperatures, leading to severe bleaching of reefs across the country, with 73 percent of all coral reefs surveyed across 71 sites being reported as significantly affected by rising temperatures.<sup>23</sup> The 1998 El-Nino event showed more devastating impact with over 90% mortality in sampled sites.<sup>24</sup> Anthropogenic disturbances such as trampling, removing corals, unsustainable bait fisheries practices and damage incurred through recreational activities puts additional strain on weakened coral reef systems. Influx of nutrients from inadequate waste management and sewage outfall creates further imbalances which affect coral health. In addition to serving as the bedrock on which the country’s two main economic sectors rely on, these natural ecosystems also play the important role of reducing wave intensity and thus control flooding and erosion. While availability of data is uneven and limited across the country, some of the studies conducted on coral reef health suggests that coral bleaching is more concentrated in central regions where tourism related activities are more clustered.<sup>25</sup> However, these studies also indicate no major differences between sheltered reefs (located within lagoons) or exposed reefs (found on the ocean ward rim of islands). An accurate determination of coral reef health requires more comprehensive and spatially representative data collection and monitoring over a considerable period of time. The opportunity to train and engage citizen scientists to collect and gather scientific data to feed into the National Coral Database is paramount.

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<sup>21</sup> MEE (2015), Maldives Intended Nationally Determined Contribution

<sup>22</sup> Ibid

<sup>23</sup> Ibrahim et al. (2016), Status of Coral Bleaching in the Maldives in 2016. MRC

<sup>24</sup> MRC (2014), Coral Reef Research Programme, <https://www.mrc.gov.mv/en/programmes-and-collaborations/coral-reef-research-programme/>

<sup>25</sup> Ibrahim et al. (2016), Status of Coral Bleaching in the Maldives in 2016. MRC



Rainwater is used for drinking by **75%** of the atoll households



**11%** of larger islands use **desalinated water**



**76%** of households in Male' and **10%** households in atoll use **bottled water**

Figure 9: Drinking water

**Freshwater sources in the Maldives are significantly scarce and are at high risk of deterioration.** The physical characteristics of the islands limit freshwater resources to rain-fed underground aquifers, rainwater and brackish ponds and lakes in selected larger islands.<sup>26</sup> The quantity and quality of these freshwater depends on a range of factors, including the island's size, thickness of the lens (usually ranging between 3-5 m), its depth under the surface, permeability of soil, rate of extraction and saltwater intrusion and permeation from land based pollutants such as those leaching from waste and sewage.<sup>27</sup> Current practices on rainwater harvesting impose further risk to its quality. The Maldives experiences water insecurity in two ways, either as the absence of water as experienced by an average 81 islands during the dry season post-tsunami, and as the excess of water, as experienced in conjunction with heavy monsoonal rain. An average of 2,218 mm of rain have been reported in the southern atolls per year, while in the central and northern parts of the country 1,966 mm and 1,799 mm were respectively reported over a 20-year period.<sup>28</sup> Available data further suggests an increase in the length of dry period resulting from the late onset of southwest monsoon over the country.<sup>29</sup> A prolonged dry period imposes potential water security threats to the islands.

**Alternative measures to improve water security has been explored, but these come at a cost.** While 75 percent of the atoll households use rainwater as their primary drinking source, its collection requires upfront investment. Desalinated water has gained popularity in the country and is being used by 11 percent of the larger islands during emergencies. Maintenance and operations of these systems require both finance and technical knowledge in addition to a sound water governance mechanism. Bottled water has also rapidly gained popularity across the country with 76 percent and 10 percent of the households in Male' and atolls using it as their primary source.<sup>30</sup> The increase in number of consumers of bottled water presents two distinctive vulnerabilities. First, the regular supply of bottled water to peripheral islands is threatened with unpredictable weather. Second, it produces large volumes of plastic waste that the islands are ill equipped to handle effectively.

<sup>26</sup> MEE (2016b), State of the Environment Report

<sup>27</sup> MEE (2016b), State of the Environment Report.

<sup>28</sup> MEE (2016a). Second National Communication of the Maldives to UNFCCC.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid

<sup>30</sup> MOH (2018), Maldives Demographic and Health Survey.



In 2017, **561,435 MT** of **fuel** was imported to the Maldives



Current **nation-wide storage capacity** of **27.9 MT** meets only **10 days** of national energy needs of the country



In 2017, total installed capacity of **renewable energy** in the Maldives was **11 MW**

Figure 10: Fuel Usage & Energy Consumption

**Transitioning into a low emission development pathway requires moving away from traditional fossil fuel sources, but this again comes at significant cost.** As a small island developing state, the Maldives does not have access to any conventional energy sources such as coal, oil or natural gas. In 2017, 561,435 metric tons of fuel was imported of which nearly 80 percent was diesel (used in transport and electricity generation), 10.3 percent petrol, 7.4 percent aviation fuel and 2.6 percent cooking gas.<sup>31</sup> 24-hour electricity has been provided to all inhabited islands through separate on location powerhouses since 2008.<sup>32</sup> Current nation-wide storage capacity of 27.9 MT meets only 10 days of national energy needs and is significantly insufficient to effectively meet the demands of the growing economy and improving living standards. Renewable energy is rapidly being used across the nation as a cleaner, alternative energy source. In 2017, the total installed capacity of renewable energy was 11 MW.<sup>33</sup> Transitioning into a fully reformed energy sector with decreased dependency on imported fuel would necessitate strengthening financial, infrastructural, technical and regulatory measures.

<sup>31</sup> MEE (2018), Island Electricity Data Book 2018

<sup>32</sup> MEE (2016), State of the Environment Report

<sup>33</sup> MEE (2018), Island Electricity Data Book 2018



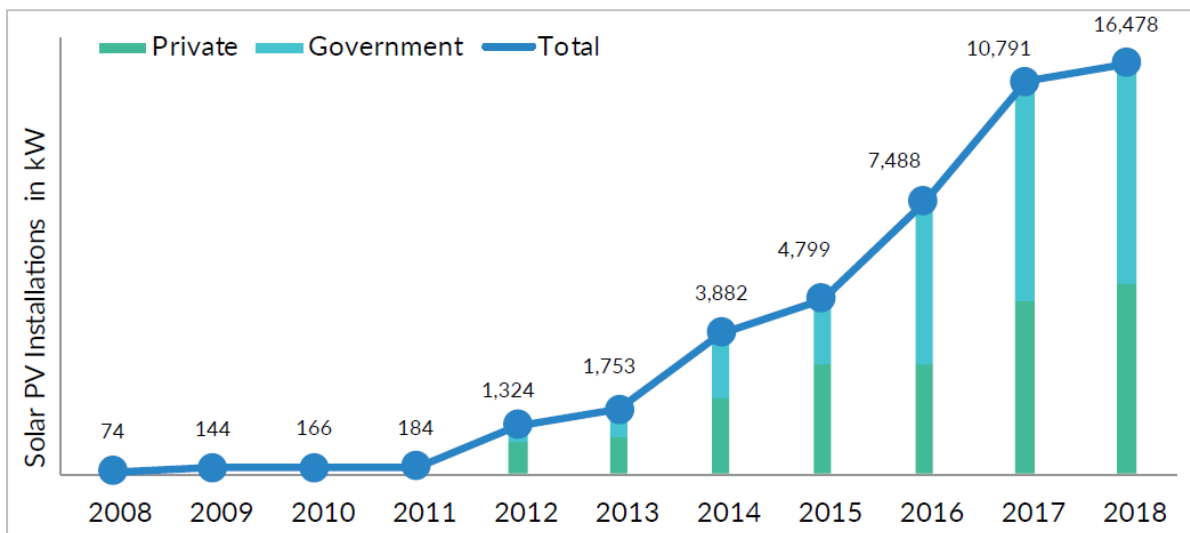


Figure 11: Renewable Energy Installation (Source: Island Energy Data Book, MEE 2018)

**The amount of waste generated across the country far exceeds its capacity for effective management.** 2013 estimates by the Ministry of Tourism indicates that 860 MT of solid waste is generated in the Maldives per day. The rate of waste generation in the Greater Male' Region, where over a third of the population and bulk of social and economic services are located, increased by 155 percent over the past decade. A similar, but lower increment was observed in the atolls where a 56.7 percent increase was estimated. Between 2016 and 2017 alone there was an increase of 216,000 tonnes of waste transferred to Thilafushi.<sup>34</sup> Like other countries, the average volume of waste produced by a tourist exceeds that of locals. A tourist produces an average of 3.5 kg of waste, while a local in Male' produces 1.7 kg and a local in the atolls produces 0.8 kg. Limitations in waste audits conducted in different regions of the country constraint the understanding on the type of waste that are being produced, and where they are produced. However, some of the available data indicate that organic waste makes the largest waste stream, followed by paper and plastic waste. Spatial constraints inflicted by the country's wide geographic dispersal makes waste management an extremely challenging and costly undertaking. Thilafushi is fast reaching its carrying capacity with over 14,000,000 cubic feet of waste in the landfill and an additional 21,000 cubic feet being injected daily.<sup>35</sup> Recycling facilities do not exist locally, however, is exported to a limited extent. In 2014, 7,277 MT of recyclables containing mostly of plastic waste was exported.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>34</sup> NBS (2019), Statistical Yearbook of the Maldives.

<sup>35</sup> <https://twitter.com/wamcomv/status/1177161639910498309>

<sup>36</sup> MEE (2016b), State of the Environment Report





**860 MT** of **solid waste** is generated per day in the Maldives



over the past decade, **waste generated** in Male' increased by **155%** and by **56.7%** in atolls



**21,000 cu ft** of waste is injected daily to the Thilafushi **landfill**



**7,277 MT** of **recyclables** exported in 2014

Figure 12: Waste Management

**Without adequate measures to address waste management, the Maldives is at increasing risk of deteriorating its already scarce natural resources.** The critical situation observed from Thilafushi alone suggests that the waste management crisis facing the Maldives today would have devastating impact on the surrounding ecosystems, biodiversity and on human health, however, the magnitude of this impact needs to be determined accurately through targeted studies. Existing literature on the topic and global experiences shows that inadequate waste management have high implications on the surrounding ecosystem and ultimately on the economy, human health and social well-being of the people. In the absence of waste management infrastructure, technology, equipment and knowledge, people in the islands resort to open burning (including those waste that contain POPs) or throwing rubbish to various parts of the islands including mangroves, wetlands, forests and beach area. Kitchen waste is often thrown to the sea. The resulting imbalance of chemical composition in the surrounding sea and reef systems is likely to contribute towards poor reef health, which makes them more vulnerable to climate change impacts.



Maldives comprises of roughly **1% land** and **99% water**



Main terrestrial habitats in the Maldives are **beaches, small forests, mangroves, wetlands** and **ponds/lakes**



**167** species of **birds** are found in the Maldives.



Marine animals consist of **400** species of molluscs, **350** species of crustaceans, **5** species of turtles, **40** species of shark and **20** species of whales and dolphins.



Biodiversity contributes to **89%** of **Gross Domestic Product**, **71%** of **employment** and **98%** of total **exports**



**50** natural habitats are **protected areas** in the Maldives

Figure 13: Biodiversity of Maldives

**Terrestrial biodiversity is very limited in the Maldives but is very diverse.** An estimated 90 percent of the islands in the Maldives have a land area less than 0.5 sq.km.<sup>37</sup> The largest island, Laamu Gan, is approximately 6 sq.km.<sup>38</sup> The physical and geographic formation of the Maldives characterises the country as an ocean state, comprising of roughly 1 percent land and 99 percent water.<sup>39</sup> Terrestrial life and biodiversity are therefore significantly limited. The main terrestrial habitats found in the Maldives are beach areas, small forests, mangroves and wetlands, ponds/lakes. Beach areas make up 5 percent of the total land area.<sup>40</sup> Approximately 14 species of mangroves are found in 150 islands, covering a total area of 7.19 sq. km.<sup>41</sup> This limits wildlife in the country to selected species of reptilians, geckos, snakes, toads/frogs and fruit bats.<sup>42</sup> Nevertheless, 167 species of birds, out of which 5 are endemic to the Maldives, have been identified.<sup>43</sup> Regulatory measures have long been in place to protect these (mostly) migratory species.

**The abundance of the Maldivian marine life is truly remarkable however, its true value is not certain due to research limitations.** Maldivian reef ecosystems spread over an area of 4,513 sq. km, making it the seventh largest reef ecosystem globally.<sup>44</sup> Around 248 reef building coral species and 258 species of algae are found in the Maldives.<sup>45</sup> Six species of seagrass have so far been identified.<sup>46</sup> Total identified fish species amount to 1,200 many of which are endemic or potentially endemic to the Maldives.<sup>47</sup> Over 400 species of molluscs, 350 species of crustaceans, five species of turtles (including internationally threatened species such as green turtle and hawksbill), 40 species of shark and 20 species of whales and dolphins are known to live in Maldivian seas.<sup>48</sup>

**The economic value of biodiversity was measured at 89 percent of the Gross Domestic Product.** In a 2009 effort to place an economic value on the country's biodiversity value, it was found that it contributed to 71 percent of total employment and 98 percent of total exports. Key economic sectors of the Maldives which includes mainly of fisheries and tourism, depend entirely on the country's limited natural resources. The data is however old and may not accurately represent the actual situation today.

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<sup>37</sup> MEE (2016c), NBSAP 2016-2025

<sup>38</sup> MEE (2016a), Second National Communication of Maldives to UNFCCC

<sup>39</sup> MEE (2016c), NBSAP 2016-2025

<sup>40</sup> Shaig (2006) in MEE (2016b), State of the Environment Report

<sup>41</sup> MEE (2016a), Second National Communication of Maldives to UNFCCC; MEE (2016), NBSAP 2016-2025;

<sup>42</sup> Ibid

<sup>43</sup> MEE (2016c), NBSAP 2016-2025

<sup>44</sup> MEE (2016c), NBSAP 2016-2025

<sup>45</sup> Ibid

<sup>46</sup> The Blue Marine Foundation (UK) and The Maldives Underwater Initiative (MUI) joint on a Protect Maldives Seagrass Campaign have identified 6 species of seagrass in the Maldives and two additional species that are likely to be found in the Maldives. See more at

<http://www.maldivesresilientreefs.com/campaigns/seagrass/resources/>

<sup>47</sup> MEE (2016c), NBSAP 2016 - 2025

<sup>48</sup> MoHAHE (2002). National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan of the Maldives.

**There is increasing disconnect between protection and conservation policy, their relative enforcement and the Maldivian development trajectory.** To date, 50 natural habitats have been protected in recognition of their ecological value equalling 24,494 hectares<sup>49</sup> (please refer to Table 1). Wide geographic dispersal of the country makes environmental protection and enforcement of regulations extremely challenging and costly. While the bulk of the policy making and monitoring function lies with central government offices (particularly the Ministry of Environment and the EPA), their implementation is constrained by limitations in available human resources, technical knowledge, equipment and finance. Conversely, other line ministries appear to be working in silos and the importance of environmental protection and factoring in climate change do not appear to be of much value. For instance, by 2017, over 202 artificial harbours have been constructed while over 10 sq. km of lagoon and reef area have been modified for land reclamation projects.<sup>50</sup> These coastal modification projects rarely factor in climate change related elements such as projected increase in MSL or wave data, nor are reclamation projects required to follow guidelines on elevation height.<sup>51</sup> Development projects also appear to have under lying political or economic motive. A clear example of this is the controversial reclamation of the Kulhudhufushi Mangrove and Wetland system to build an airport in 2018.<sup>52</sup> Therefore, while environmental protection and preservation appear in policy documents, its management and implementation become challenging without commitment from all levels of government and community. However, the recruitment of EPA licensed Environment Officers in atoll and city councils (by 2021) promises to be a positive forward step in community led conservation mechanisms.<sup>53</sup> This would especially work in light of the new fiscal decentralization changes (which also includes 40 percent revenue collection from natural ecosystems within a given constituency as block grants) that would come into effect in 2020.<sup>54</sup>

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>Protected Areas</b>	42	42	42	42	42	42	50
<b>Protected islands</b>	18	18	18	18	18	18	21
<b>Marine Protected Areas</b>	33	33	33	33	33	33	38
<b>Mangrove Areas</b>	5	5	5	5	5	5	7
<b>Protected birds</b>	70	103	103	103	103	103	103
<b>Marine animals prohibited for fishing collection</b>	0	0	1	2	2	12	12

*Table 1: Number of Protected Areas and Species by Type (NBS, 2019)*

<sup>49</sup> MEE (2016b), State of the Environment

<sup>50</sup> MEE (2016c), NBSAP, 2016 - 2025

<sup>51</sup> Interviews with Ministry of National Planning and Infrastructure and Maldives Transport and Contracting Company in October 2019.

<sup>52</sup> Please see <https://raajje.mv/49098>;

<https://maldivesindependent.com/environment/environmentalists-cry-foul-as-kulhudhufushi-airport-project-begins-133763>; <https://maldivesindependent.com/environment/kulhudhufushi-airport-project-fast-tracked-as-election-nears-140643>; <https://edition.mv/news/4472>

<sup>53</sup> GoM (2019), Strategic Action Plan 2019-2023

<sup>54</sup> Amendments to the Decentralization Act. Please see page 59-60, Clause 70 (a). Available at [https://majlis.gov.mv/storage/action\\_files/370/eL470rq8Rc7stlewyLV3FyLofPSEqA8GzP0x5Vpd.pdf](https://majlis.gov.mv/storage/action_files/370/eL470rq8Rc7stlewyLV3FyLofPSEqA8GzP0x5Vpd.pdf)



There are **700** licensed **fishing vessels** in the Maldives



Over **16,000** people are **employed** in the fishing and agriculture sector in the Maldives. Of this, **89%** are **men**



in 2017, **98.3 thousand MT** of fisheries products were exported, and **44.9 thousand MT** was consumed locally



Total fish catch of **143.2 thousand MT** was recorded in 2017

Figure 14: Fishing Industry of Maldives

**Fishing has been an important source of livelihood for the Maldivian communities since traditional times. Its sustainability is imperative to maintain socio-economic well-being and cultural identity of Maldivians.** There are approximately 700 licensed fishing vessels in the Maldives.<sup>55</sup> Over 16,000 people are reported to be employed in the fishing and agriculture sector of which 89 percent are males.<sup>56</sup> Deep sea fisheries is ranked among the top five occupation at the national level with 9,581 individuals engaged in the sector.<sup>57</sup> Approximately 98.3 thousand MT of fisheries product was exported in 2017 while 44.9 thousand MT were consumed locally. Total fish catch in the Maldives improved by 10.8 percent in 2017 compared with 2016 figures. A total of 143.2 thousand MT was reported in 2017. However, this improvement is not uniform across the country. It is difficult to cluster these atolls based on their geographic location (i.e., northern, central or southern regions of the country) however, the figures are almost equally divided. The atolls where fish catch improved between 2016-2017 were Shaviyani, Noonu, Meemu, Dhaalu, Thaa, Laamu, Gaafu Alifu, Gaafu Dhaalu and Gnaviyani. The atolls where fish catch declined between the same period were Haa Alifu, Haa Dhaalu, Raa, Baa, Kaafu, Alifu Alifu, Alifu Dhaalu, Vaavu, Faafu and Seenu. The atoll with the highest fish catches for the period 2015 to 2017 is Gaafu Alifu Atoll.<sup>58</sup> Looking at the average number of fishing vessels according to locality, the data shows Laamu Atoll and Gaafu Alifu Atoll had the highest average number of fishing vessels engaged in fisheries in a month (40 and 32 vessels respectively in 2017).<sup>59</sup> The atolls with the lowest engagement were Vaavu and Baa with 2 and 11 vessels respectively in the same year.<sup>60</sup> Available data on reef fish catch is limited in the country, but a 2014 study estimates that total reef fish catch is between 10,400 MT and 29,145 MT.<sup>61</sup> Availability of bait fish is critical to the fisheries sector. Most common species of bait fisheries used in the Maldives are sprats (43 percent), fusiliers (37 percent), cardinals (10 percent) and anchovies (7 percent).<sup>62</sup> While climate change is likely to affect coral health and bait fish stock, it is human inflicted unsustainable

<sup>55</sup> MoFMRA (2019), Licensed fishing vessels as of 31 October 2019, available at <https://www.fishagri.gov.mv/storage/documents/UlayBSvaa6hxXkoCcA6MYxBQr3110T4dasVEHAGQ.pdf>

<sup>56</sup> NBS (2014). Statistical Release IV. Employment.

<sup>57</sup> NBS (2018). Household Income and Expenditure Survey. Employment Indicator Sheet.

<sup>58</sup> NBS (2019). Statistical Yearbook of the Maldives 2018.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid

<sup>60</sup> Ibid

<sup>61</sup> Sattar S.A., et al (2014). Current status of the reef fisheries of Maldives and recommendations for management

<sup>62</sup> MEE (2016), Second National Communication of the Maldives to UNFCCC

practices that are widely perceived as the reason for bait fish decline in the Maldives.<sup>63</sup>

**Climate change is likely to exacerbate existing challenges related with agriculture and food security, but it also presents an opportunity to employ innovative ways to boost our crop production.** Agriculture in the Maldives have never been done at a significant commercial scale, mainly due to the limitations in available land for cultivation, poor soil quality and limitations in human and other resources. There are a handful of agricultural islands spread across the country though to some extent, certain crops are grown for subsistence. Limited variety in crops grown locally, varied quantities and challenges in storage and transportation have all led to extreme high dependency (over 90 percent) in imported food items.<sup>64</sup> Increased frequency and intensity of natural disasters puts additional strain on agricultural communities. For instance, extreme weather events in 2007 affected Laamu, Baa and Raa Atoll with intense rainfall and associated flooding while Haa Alifu, Shaviyani, Raa, Laamu, Gaafu Dhaalu, Gnaviyani and Addu reported agricultural damage from flooding originating from surges or tidal waves.<sup>65</sup> Certain agricultural islands (for example those in Laamu Atoll where land is abundant) are subjected annual events. Flooding by seawater causes saltwater infiltration to the underground aquifers and cause additional issues. Moving away from traditional forms of farming and employing innovative methods (e.g. climate smart greenhouses, vertical farming, climate resistant seedlings) is important.



Figure 15: Chemicals

<sup>63</sup> UNDP (2016), Multisector Dialogue Sessions, Laamu Atoll, LECReD

<sup>64</sup> Shabau (2006) in MEE (2016), Second National Communication of the Maldives to UNFCCC

<sup>65</sup> MEE (2016), Second National Communication of the Maldives to UNFCCC

**Despite not being a producer of any chemicals locally, the amount of chemical usage in the Maldives are at alarming levels.** Chemicals are used across many industries and sectors in the Maldives ranging from agriculture, boat building, construction, transportation, energy and health. The 2016 SOE reported a 105 percent increase in expenditure towards chemical products in the Maldives between 2010 and 2014, of which 41 percent were related to the energy and transport sectors. Data on chemical usage in the Maldives is significantly limited which disables further analysis on the sector. However, empirical evidence suggests that chemicals are used extensively as pesticides and fertilizers in agriculture and as solvents, paints, glues and adhesives within the boat building sector. A GEF SGP project executed by local NGO Water Care focusing on water safety planning in small islands found that groundwater in Alifu Alifu Thoddhoo, a leading agricultural island, is severely contaminated through continued exposure of unregulated agro-chemicals including pesticides and fertilizers.<sup>66</sup> Concomitant to groundwater pollution, chemicals seepage also deteriorate soil quality leading to land degradation. Safe administration and management of chemicals is a huge challenge in a country constrained with available storage space and technical capacity. The unfortunate incident involving a chemical warehouse in 2019 demonstrated the country's vulnerability to chemicals.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Water Care (2016), Water Safety Plan for Groundwater in AA, Thoddhoo and Code of Practice on piped drinking water sampling and safety plans

<sup>67</sup> <https://edition.mv/news/12507>

## 5. Situation of socially vulnerable groups

**The situation of women and girls in the Maldives remain largely the same but may be reversing in certain areas.** The general indicators relating to education and health shows good performance in relation to females. For instance, Maldives has achieved gender parity in primary and secondary school education. However, other social, economic and political indicators show a different picture. It is observed that the number of child marriages is relatively high (106 children aged between 15 to 17 years were reported as married in 2014) and the number of girls being refrained from attending an educational institution is also high (1,362 females in 2014).<sup>68</sup> Gender based violence continues to be a serious issue. In 2017, UNFPA reported that 96 percent of Maldivian women experienced gender-based violence at some point during their lifetime and 40 percent of these females had their first experience before the age of 10.<sup>69</sup> More recent figures from the Demographic and Health Survey shows one in every four Maldivian women have experienced some form of violence during her life. The level of sexual harassment in the workplace is difficult to determine due to lack of data.

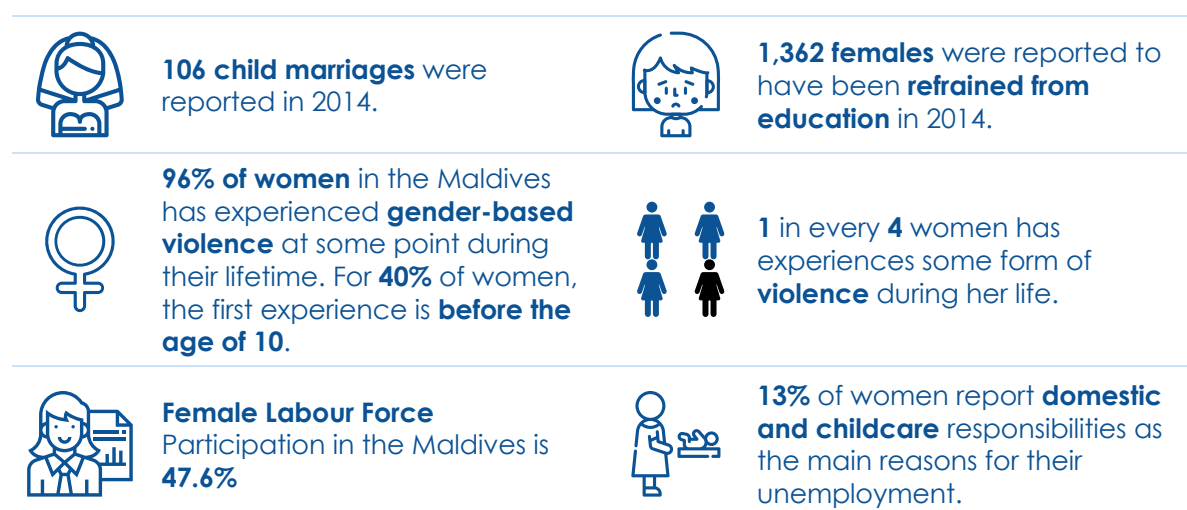


Figure 16: Challenges Faced by Women

**Women continues to face challenges in equal participation in economic work.** Female Labour Force Participation for the Maldives was at 47.6 percent in the 2014 Census, a slight improvement from the previous census.<sup>70</sup> Female unemployment is higher in all age groups. Where employed, women tend to cluster in traditional stereotypical fields, such as education or nursing, and significantly less in specialized fields such as engineering, tourism, construction and utilities service providers. The two areas where women are mostly concentrated are civil service (mostly in lower posts)

<sup>68</sup> NBS and UNICEF (2014), Children in Maldives. Analysis of Children of the Maldives from Census 2014.

<sup>69</sup> UNFPA (2017). Maldivian Women says #MeToo. Last updated February 2018.

<https://maldives.unfpa.org/en/news/maldivian-women-say-metoo>

<sup>70</sup> NBS (2014), Maldives Population and Housing Census, Statistical Release IV: Employment.



and the 'manufacturing sector' which mainly includes trickled down economic work such as food processing, home tailoring, etc. Domestic and childcare responsibilities were identified by 13 percent females as their main reason for being unemployed, while only 1 percent of males reported the same reason.<sup>71</sup> Majority of the women in the Maldives do not have access to higher paying, higher quality work, mostly due to the socially constructed roles and responsibilities which places them at the forefront of domestic and dependent care work for family members. Approximately 60% of the women who reported to be engaged in some form of economic activity is engaged in the 'manufacturing' sector, which allows them greater flexibility to manage their time, but at the same time deprives them from employment related benefits including pension and health insurance. During the last census, approximately 28% of women were recorded as own account workers who work from their living quarters<sup>72</sup>. The type of work these women engage in are closely linked to the natural surroundings. These include crafting thatch products from coconut palm leaves, weaving reed mats and coir ropes, preparing locally grown food delicacies for sale, harvesting sea almonds (*Terminalia catappa*) and post-harvest fish processing work. Access to natural resources such as mangroves, ponds, shallow reefs, wetlands, agricultural land is imperative to these female workers who depend almost entirely on the limited natural resources for their livelihoods. Any circumstances arising from either from natural or anthropogenic origins that may have an impact on these natural resources would be devastating for these groups of female workers. These changes may include loss of beaches, mangroves, forests, wetlands, damage to coral reefs or circumstances where women are unable to continue their traditional activities. For example, women have been involved in producing herbal medicine from native plants, but this knowledge is slowly being lost due to rapid deforestation.

**Access to Finance is harder for women than men.** This leaves female entrepreneurs more vulnerable than their male counterparts. Maldivian financial laws recognize two types of collateral – land property and fishing/interisland transport vessels – both of which are mainly owned by men. Sole home ownership of women is at 3.1% compared with 65.5% men<sup>73</sup> while majority of the fishing and other transport vessels are also owned by men.<sup>74</sup> Female entrepreneurs are further disadvantaged with the lack of adequate bookkeeping records or history of creditworthiness. The newly established SME Development Financing Corporation (SDFC) eases some of the existing limitations to women in accessing investment capital through gender sensitive selection criteria.

**Domestic and reproductive related tasks are disproportionately divided between male and female members of the family.** A multitude of social, cultural and religious factors contribute to this distribution. First, there is strongly held perception that domestic and childcare duties are primarily a woman's responsibility.<sup>75</sup> Second, females are expected to prioritize their family and household above economic work and participation in the social sphere.<sup>76</sup> Third, support networks (e.g. childcare

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid

<sup>72</sup> NBS (2014). *Maldives Population and Housing Census: Statistical release IV: Employment*

<sup>73</sup> Premaratne and Kudaliyanage (2016). *Issues, Challenges and Prospects of Women-owned Small and Medium Scale Enterprises in Maldives*. International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications. Volume 6, Issue 9, September 2016. Pages 771-781.

<sup>74</sup> El Horr and Pande (2016). *Understanding Gender in Maldives. Towards Inclusive Development*.

<sup>75</sup> UN Women and UNFPA (2019), *Research Papers on the Situation of Women in the Maldives*

<sup>76</sup> Ibid



facilities, transport, safe onsite accommodation) are lacking in majority of islands which discourages women from going to work outside their homes.<sup>77</sup> These factors prompts even qualified women to take up less demanding and lower paying jobs in return for greater employment flexibility. Approximately 60 percent of women work in the informal manufacturing sector and 28 percent are own account workers.<sup>78</sup> Women are more engaged in unpaid care work than men (6 hours compared to 3 hours) thereby restricting the time left for economic work and contributing to a gender pay gap.<sup>79</sup>



The majority of the Maldivian labour force is aged **18-34**



**Youth** make up **75%** of the **unemployed** population. Out of this, **59%** are young men and **4.6%** women



Challenges the youth face include **corruption, lack of education, drugs, unemployment, housing, gangs and violent jihad**



There are **2,300** registered **NGOs** and **CBOs** in the Maldives

Figure 17: Youth & Labour Force

**More than half of the Maldivian labour force is aged between 18 to 34.**<sup>80</sup> However, youth also makes 75 percent of the unemployed population. Young men are more likely to be unemployed than young women (59 percent compared to 40.6 percent). Masculine norms encourage most school leaving males to seek employment instead of continuing on a higher education path, but they lack important technical skills as well as soft skills that employers seek. Proportion of youth who are recognized as neither employed, nor studying or attending training is higher. As per the HIES 2016, the proportion of the population aged between 15-24 falling under the NEET categorization is 21 percent (21% males and 24% females). According to the 2014 census, the main reason for unemployment among 15-19 age group is education. Women, aged between 20 and 34, cite household and childcare as their reason for being unemployed, while men in the same age group report difficulties in securing a suitable job, lack of opportunities in resident island, ill health and in some cases, disability.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid

<sup>78</sup> NBS (2014), Maldives Population and Housing Census, Statistical Release IV: Employment.

<sup>79</sup> NBS (2016), Household Income and Expenditure Survey. Analytical Report III; Employment.

<sup>80</sup> Figures from this section is derived from - NBS and UNFPA (2017), Thematic Analysis on Youth in the Maldives based on 2014 Population and Housing Census data.

**Youth in the Maldives are exposed to multiple vulnerabilities.** A study involving 173 youth carried out by UNDP identified the following seven challenges facing youth (stated in order of concern); corruption, education, drugs, unemployment, housing, gangs and violent jihad. As per the report, there is high perception among youth that economic opportunities are tied with political connections, despite the calibre of the candidate. Access to education, especially in peripheral islands is another key concern, along with the recognition that the current education system does not align with the skill sets required by the market. Social issues such as drug use, gang violence, mental health and isolation are recognized as significant problems. Young people require better access to education, economic and political opportunities, and improve their voice and agency in matters relating to their lives.

**Women's participation in leadership positions are low throughout the country.** Socially constructed gender norms continue to weigh women down, disabling their full and meaningful participation in decision making roles and in community and political leadership roles. The HIES reports only 19.5 percent of women in managerial positions in the country. In Parliament, the number of female Parliamentarians is only 4 out of a total 87.<sup>81</sup> However, the Maldives has seen a number of positive affirmative actions taken to consciously increase the number of women in leadership posts. Two female judges were appointed to the Supreme Court bench for the first time in history in 2019<sup>82</sup>, while the 8<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Decentralization Act passed in December 2019 included a 33 percent allocation to female councillors.<sup>83</sup>

**CSOs and NGOs in the country are still an at infant stage, however, renewed efforts are being undertaken to stimulate their role in environmental protection and community development.** With the institutional changes brought forth by President Solih's administration, the mandate of community empowerment is separated from the Home Ministry and transferred to the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Community Empowerment. The MoYSCE reports 2,300 registered NGOs and CBOs, with an average of 2-3 new applications coming in daily. However, the number of active NGOs/CBOs is not known, nor is there any information about their current activities, focus areas, composition or gender representative. The MoYSCE is currently working towards establishing an updated roster of active NGO's and CSO's while also trying to bring amendments to the NGO Act. An important change that is being proposed is to allow such bodies to hibernate without revoking their registration. Additional support is also being extended by the Ministry, including atoll level workshops, NGO Fair for networking and showcasing, establishing a CSO Portal and conducting a National Environmental Symposium with the Ministry of Environment to bring grassroots experience to policy level discussions.

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<sup>81</sup> <https://edition.mv/news/9997>

<sup>82</sup> <https://maldivesindependent.com/politics/maldives-parliament-approves-first-female-supreme-court-justices-147750>

<sup>83</sup> <https://edition.mv/news/13806>

## 6. Legislative changes



New law on **pesticides** sets national standard for import, use and proper disposal of pesticides



Set quotas for **33%** of councilors to be **female**



**5%** of **national revenue** is to be directed to local councils



**40%** of revenue from **natural resources** within geographic parameters of the constituency and **100%** revenue generated from the lands to be directed to the **council**

*Figure 18: Recent Legislative Changes*

The main legislative architecture that is relevant to the GEF SGP in Maldives still remains in draft form or in debate in the Parliament. These includes important legislation on water, energy, waste management, chemical management, climate change and biodiversity protection. However, progress have been attained at some fronts. For instance, a new law on pesticides has recently been rectified by the President, which sets national standards for the import, use and proper disposal of pesticides. The law aims to control pesticide use in the country and minimize negative impacts on environmental and human health. Through the act, a Pesticides Unit will be created at the Ministry of Fisheries, Marine Resources and Agriculture who will work with communities to adopt best practices, conduct research, collect data, carry out monitoring and promote community awareness.

In December 2019, the 8<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Decentralization Act was passed by the Parliament, which would significantly change project implementation landscape in the island communities. Some key elements of the new amendment include increasing the council term up to five years and setting quotas for female councilors' equivalent to 33 percent. The amendment allows more fiscal decentralization with 5 percent of national revenue to be directed to local councils and an additional 40 percent of revenue from natural resources within the geographic parameters of that constituency and 100 percent of all revenue generated from lands to be directed to the councils.

In terms of environmental protection, the amendments specify responsibilities on the councils to ensure protection and sustainable use of natural resources including coral reefs, coastal resources, wetlands and mangroves. It mandates effective and environmentally conscious land use planning while considering the surrounding marine habitats as a continuation of the island.

## 7. National priorities and current policy direction: The Government's Strategic Action Plan for 2019 – 2023

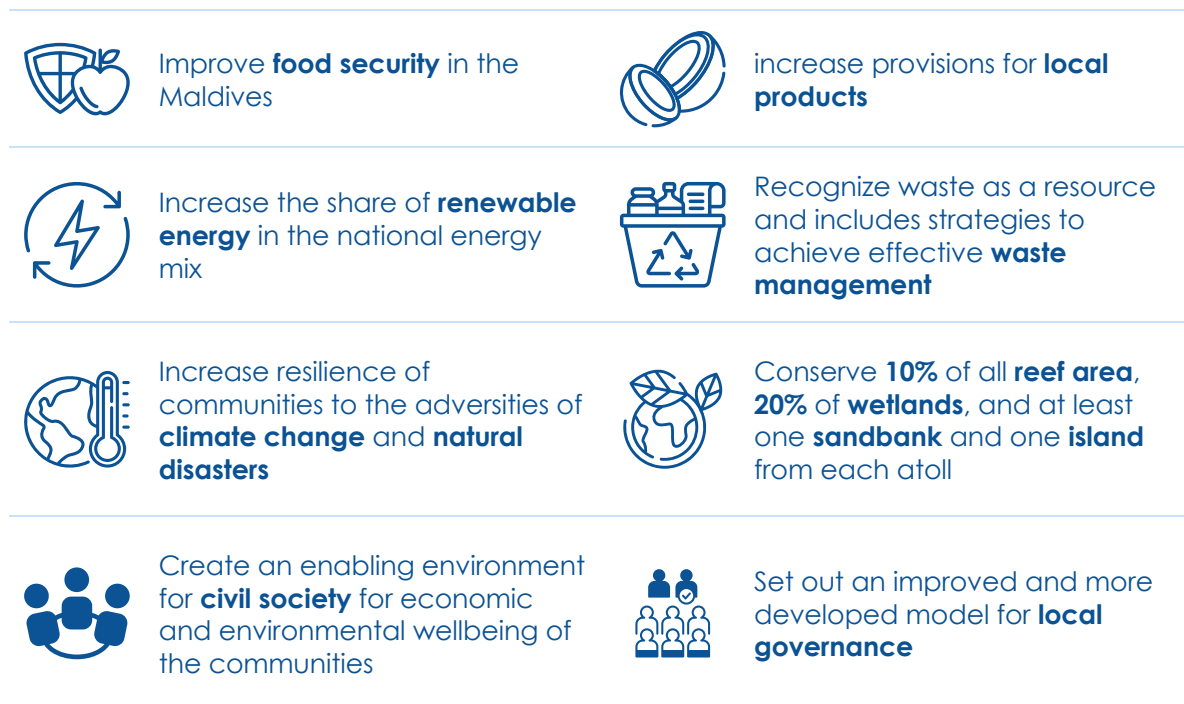


Figure 19: National Priorities Specified in SAP

**After a planning void of over a decade, the Maldives is currently pursuing a results-based 5-year Strategic Action Plan.** The Maldives was at a planning void after the 2012 sudden transfer of government which invalidated the 2009 Strategic Action Plan formulated by the administration of President Mohamed Nasheed. Prior to the 2009 SAP, national planning directives were specified in the National Development Plans, formulated between 1985 and 2010 for five-year periods. The period between 2012 and 2014 is characterized with political instability, polarizing debates on constitutional rights and infancy in democracy and newly formed state institutions.

**The current Strategic Action Plan attempts to streamline sector plans with the national development agenda set forth by the coalition government, the constitution, national laws and international commitment.** The SAP 2019 – 2023 differentiates itself by attaching sub-sector policies to measurable and time-based development targets, whilst additionally, stipulating a framework for joint implementation and monitoring by public, private and civil society partners. It is divided into five broad sectors (Blue Economy, Dignified Families, Caring State, *Jazeera Dhiriulhun* or Island Life and Good Governance) and 33 sub-sectors.

**Policies in the fisheries sub-sector matrix presents important linkages with GEF's Global Strategic Initiatives.** The fisheries sub-sector matrix includes actions on widening nationwide biological studies, size sampling and monitoring for ocean fisheries

resources as well as similar sampling for reef-based fisheries. It further recognizes the importance of maintaining the integrity and well-being of the marine ecosystems through identifying actions on collecting data, studies on coral recruitment and settlement, conducting marine science camps and collecting data on specific marine species such as sharks. Promotion of value addition of fisheries products is also identified as a priority for the next four years, with financing mechanisms and trainings set in place. Similarly, priority has also been given to develop the aquaculture industry as a diversification strategy of the fisheries sector. The SAP identifies opportunities for communities to establish demonstrative projects involving multi-species hatcheries and grouper and sea-cucumber grow-out farms in island lagoons and in wetland systems. It further states training opportunities, including those targeted at women and people with disabilities, to further develop the aquaculture industry.

***There is emphasis in the SAP to improve food security in the Maldives through a mix of regulatory changes, adopting new technologies for climate smart agriculture, agroforestry and improving extension services to farmers.*** The SAP identifies actions to adopt new post harvesting techniques to process locally grown crops including mango, papaya, coconut and chilli as a measure to improve local food security. Reviving traditional crops such as taros and sweet potatoes as well as diversifying farming to include poultry and livestock have also been identified as strategies. Additional support identified in the agriculture sub-sector includes loan schemes, training and extension services, especially those targeting female farmers. Coconut based agroforestry has also been included as a strategy to promote a sustainable agricultural model in the communities.

***The SAP recognizes increased provisions for local products over imports. For instance, the tourism subsector matrix includes strategies to implement promotional mechanisms where locally manufactured products including arts, crafts and cuisine are prioritized.*** This provides a unique opportunity for local NGOs/CSOs to stimulate local production which in turn is likely to promote conservation and sustainable use of natural resources within island communities. Most of the raw materials for local crafts are sourced from nature (e.g. lacquer work, traditional reed mats, coir ropes, miniature models of fishing vessels). The Arts, Culture and Heritage subsector further identifies a MVR 2 million grant scheme for local artists and cultural practitioners to stimulate local arts and crafts. These present numerous co-financing and scale up opportunities for the GEF SGP.

***The SAP sets a national target to increase the share of renewable energy in the national energy mix by 20 percent.*** To stimulate the transition to clean energy technologies, the SAP identify strategies to improve regulations and introduce new technologies to the Maldivian energy industry. Regulatory changes include establishing mechanisms to purchase excess renewable energy from private entities and households effective from 2020 onwards. With these regulatory changes, GEF SGP can provide substantial support for local communities to embrace clean energy while contributing to targets on climate change mitigation.

***The SAP recognizes waste as a resource.*** Much of the policies in the waste subsector matrix of the SAP focus on waste reduction through recognizing the economic value of different waste streams, introducing regulatory measures and instilling environmentally conscious behaviour and lifestyles. A number of strategies have been

formulated to address the different systematic issues that challenge effective waste management in small islands. One such intervention is the issue of electricity supply to Island Waste Management Centres (IWMC) to enable operation of solid waste management equipment and machinery. The SAP targets to have 30 percent of all IWMCs use solar energy for their operation. Other key strategies in the waste matrix that links directly with the SGP's interest areas are the phase out of single use plastic and the target set on reducing open burning in the islands by 50 percent by 2023. The SAP recognizes data limitations across the country in terms of waste generated and calls for waste audits and studies to identify solutions for management of hazardous chemical waste within an island context.

**Increasing resilience of communities to the adversities of climate change and natural disasters is central to the SAP.** The main focus of the SAP is to strengthen the adaptive capacity of communities to current and future climate vulnerabilities through a legislative, regulatory and institutional framework. However, several community level actions have also been identified, including nationwide tree planting programs, community nurseries, taking inventory of coconut groves and starting new groves, preserving coastal vegetation, experimenting soft coastal protection measures, improving disaster preparedness, collecting data and evidence and enhancing community awareness on climate change and disaster related topics.

**Linking with the targets set out in the NBSAP, the SAP further sets targets to conserve at least 10 percent of all reef area, 20 percent of wetlands and at least one sandbank and one island from each atoll.** This is planned to be achieved through a mix of centrally and community protected areas and management schemes. Further, a number of regulatory and legislative changes are identified in the SAP to integrate environmental preservation and biodiversity conservation. These include changes to regulations and laws on land use planning, local development planning, aquaculture and mariculture, chemical use and management and protection of important ecosystems and threatened species. The SAP identifies a Pesticides Act which has since been passed by the Parliament. Specialised trainings targeted at NGOs and CBOs on biodiversity conservation is also included as an action. This is to be complemented with fiscal and non-fiscal incentives for CSOs and community groups engaged in ecosystem restoration works (particularly restorative works on coral reefs, mangroves and forests). The SGP can also create synergies through contributing to knowledge management, especially in the areas of creating natural resources maps for islands, compiling information of medicinal plants, coconut groves, local flora, megafauna, seagrass meadows, chemical use and water resources.

**The SAP recognizes the crucial role played by civil society in improving everyday lives.** Policies laid out in the community empowerment matrix of the SAP looks at creating an enabling environment for civil society to perform their function in improving social, economic and environmental well-being of their communities. These includes providing access to space to work, training and development opportunities, participate in local development planning, establishing a CSO-portal and conducting an annual NGO Fair to facilitate networking, knowledge sharing and create synergies. Community Social Groups are to be established in all islands, and further, Community Empowerment Officers are also to be appointment (of which 30% are women). The CSG is recognized as an important stakeholder for GEF SGP implementation over the next operational cycle.

***The SAP sets out an improved and more devolved model for local governance.***

Amendments to the Decentralization Act as set forth in the SAP has already been passed by the Parliament, placing the Maldives on a new development path in terms of local governance. The SAP aims to improve revenue generation of local councils by 70 percent from 2018 levels. Key amendments to the Decentralization Act include allocating 5 percent of national revenue to local councils in the form of block grants and releasing 40 percent of revenue generated from natural resources in a given constituency (e.g. lagoons, reefs, islands) to that respective council. This would significantly increase the programme budget for islands and offers opportunity for meaningful engagement of the civil society to achieve shared goals. More administrative functions are also to be devolved to the local level which is likely to facilitate speedier implementation of projects over this operational cycle.

## 8. SIDS Climate Smart Resilient Islands Initiative

President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih launched the SIDS Climate Smart Resilient Islands Initiative at the UN Climate Action Summit in 2019. The objective of this initiative is to equip small island developing states with proven and tested approaches to increase their resilience to the adversities to climate change.

The initiative is at an infancy stage, but roughly comprises the following components. Of the total ten components, seven have direct linkages with GEF priority focal areas.

### Component One: Environmental Protected Areas



- Conserve and self-manage at least 10% of the terrestrial, coastal and marine areas in SIDS by 2020.
- Enhance healthiness of ocean through 100% ban of plastic littering in island waters by 2025.
- Boost natural resilience of islands through indigenous/climate proofing technologies and nature-based solutions.

### Component two: Climate Services



- SIDS are equipped with state-of-the-art technology to observe and predict both climate and non-climate induced hazards by 2030.
- Collaborate with all SIDS site-specific research centers that would enable island specific solutions for disaster risk reduction and ensuring scientific based policy directions in SIDS.

### Component Three: Inter-island connectivity



- Introduction of low emission transport networks by 2050.
- Digital communication services between islands, including e-governance, e-commerce and telemedicine in SIDS by 2025

### Component Four: Food Security



- Designate adequate number of sustainable fishing grounds in island waters for domestic consumption and as an economic fishing ground by 2030.
- Promote and advocate for innovative and sustainable marine and aquaculture farming practices in all SIDS.
- Promote SIDS specific urban agriculture and alternative agricultural farming in SIDS.
- Establish food storage facilities (for staple food) at least with inadequate of reach in the event of extreme weather events.
- Establish fair market and trading policy for trading food products in SIDS by 2030 that address concerns of all farmers, especially small subsistence farmers.



- Integrate agro-forestry and watershed management including climate change dimension.
- Develop sustainable land management, promoting fixed/permanent agriculture, reduce burning, reduce erosion, and increase soil fertility.

### Component Five: Green Tourism



- Devise stringent governance and grievance mechanism for sustainable use of island ecosystem by 2022.
- Substantially increase energy efficiency and renewable energy in tourism service industry by 2022.

### Component Six: Integrated Waste Management



- Phase-out of single use plastics by 2025.
- Reduce, reuse, recycle of at least 50% waste by 2023.
- Prepare and implement Sustainable Consumption Pattern (SCP) for SIDS with support from the 10-Year Framework Programme on SCP.

### Component Seven: Climate Proof Infrastructure



- Enhance standards, codes and regulations to ensure climate proofing is addressed in the SIDS critical infrastructure by 2025.
- Establish/enhance affordable insurance mechanism to protect infrastructures from slow on set of events or extreme events by 2030.
- Enhance multilateral cooperation to address permanent losses and damages, and climate displacement.

### Component Eight: Self- Sustaining, sustainable and smart energy systems



- Increase share and diversity of renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies in the national energy mix by 2030.
- Enhance collaboration within the framework of the SIDS Lighthouses Initiative for improved coordinated action to accelerate deployment of renewable energy solutions in all sectors

### Component Nine: Water Security



- Increase storage capacity and catchment management by 2022.
- Establish water distribution networks with treatment facilities by 2023.
- Wastewater recycling technologies for enhancement of ground water aquifers by 2025.
- Increase the use of decentralized renewable solutions in water resource management

## Component Ten: Smart Health Facilities



- Strengthening the climate resilience and environmental sustainability of healthcare facilities.
- Work towards building green or eco-hospitals through mandating the incorporation of sustainable elements in the siting, design, construction and landscaping of new buildings, and in building expansion and/or retrofit projects.
- Support broader aspects of sustainability in the built environment. Support the use of local and regional materials (reducing transportation energy), utilize salvaged and recycled materials (reducing energy otherwise expended on new production), and support toxic-free products and manufacturing processes.
- Promote the use of modern and renewable energy solutions for resilient health facilities.

## Component Eleven: Gender Equality and Intergenerational Partnership



- Engagement and empowerment of youth in all aspects of climate change.
- Inculcate climate change into educational curriculums.
- Advocate for youth programme on climate actions across the SIDS and at global level to demand for more ambition.
- Promoting and enhancing gender equality and women's equal participation, including in policies and programmes in the public and private sectors in SIDS.
- Enhancing human resource capacity to analyse climate risks for better adaptation policies and measures, including undertaking climate modelling and projection.

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## Annex 1 – Summary of Environmental Issues ranked according to risk and probability of impact from SGP interventions

Issue	Risk Rating	Probability of positive impact through GEF SGP
Climate Change	<b>High</b> Global temperature rise resulting from increased GHG emissions will have devastating impact on small islands	<b>Low</b> GHG emissions by SIDs are negligible in global terms & it is not possible to reverse climate change through SGP alone, however, some interventions can equip communities to adapt to climate change (e.g. coastal protection projects, renewable energy projects)
Damage to coral reefs	<b>Moderate – High</b> Reefs around close proximity to inhabited islands are at risk of being damaged through increased recreation and livelihood activities. Global warming will also contribute towards further deterioration	<b>High</b> Projects focusing on improved fisheries practices, habitat protection, citizen science engagement and awareness building work is likely to bring notable improvements in coral reef health
Water Scarcity	<b>Moderate - High</b> Water scarcity is intensified during the dry period extending from January to April every year but there are ongoing large-scale interventions to address water scarcity in inhabited islands	<b>High</b> Demonstration projects on groundwater recharge, water efficiency and behavioural change is likely to contribute significantly to water security issues in the islands
Access to clean energy	<b>High</b> Maldives is fully dependent on imported fossil fuels for electricity generation and transport.	<b>High</b> Infrastructure projects to increase generation of renewable energy and demonstration projects on improving energy efficiency will contribute significantly towards improving energy security in island communities
Waste Management	<b>High</b> Waste management is the most visible and pressing environmental concern impacting public health, economy and environmental health. There are no systems in place to effectively address growing chemical usage and safe disposal in the country.	<b>High</b> Waste management issues can be addressed through projects building on circular economy models, improved agriculture, training and awareness
Biodiversity Conservation	<b>Moderate – High</b> Biodiversity conservation efforts are undertaken in an unsystematic manner, with conscious protection efforts in some areas and planned alteration of natural habitats in other areas to cater for socio-economic development needs	<b>High</b> Community based conservation efforts can play a significant role in promoting local solutions to biodiversity conservation

Sustaining Fisheries	<p><b>Low-Moderate</b>  Unsustainable fisheries practices (e.g. damaging corals to extract bait fish) have been linked with decline in fisheries but it is also linked with broader factors including decline in global fish stocks, increase in sea surface temperature and seasonality of fisheries</p>	<p><b>Moderate</b>  Projects focusing on improving fisheries practices is likely to contribute towards sustainability of the fisheries sector</p>
Food Security	<p><b>High</b>  Maldives exhibit high food insecurity due to the lack of adequate agricultural land, poor soil quality, weak transportation systems and high dependency on foreign imports</p>	<p><b>Moderate to High</b>  Climate smart agriculture projects can significantly improve food securities in given localities but would require a host of other factors (eg. Transport networks, value chain) for it to effectively address food security issues faced by the country</p>

## Annex 2 – Stakeholder Consultations

Tabulated summary of consulted stakeholders

	Name	Designation	Organization
1	Aileen Niyaz	Assistant Director	Min. of Environment
2	Mariyam Ana Hassan	Assistant Director	Min. of Environment
3	Mohamed Inaz	Project Manager, LCEI	Min. of Environment
4	Midhhath Abdul Rasheed	GEF Operational Focal Point Representation	Min. of Environment
5	Ahmed Ali	Director General	Min. of Environment
6	Shazeena Ali	Project Officer	Min. of Environment
7	Mariyam Fazleena Musthafa	Assistant Director	Min. of Environment
8	Adam Manik	DDG	MoFMRA
9	Aminath Lubna	Assistant Director	MoFMRA
10	Adam Ziyad	Fisheries Compliance Director	MoFMRA
11	Ismail Rasheed	Director	MoFMRA
12	Shafia Naeem	Aquatic pathologist	MoFMRA
13	Ali Amir	Director	MoFMRA
14	Aminath Shafia	Permanent Secretary	MoFMRA
15	Fathmath Yumna	Deputy Minister	MoGFSS
16	Mariyam Sidhmeen	Director	MoGFSS
17	Fathimath Shehezinee	Community Empowerment Consultant and NSC Member	MoYSCE
18	Fathmath Zuhana	Programme Analyst	UN Women
19	Shamha Naseer	Programme Analyst	UNDP
20	Aishath Saadh	Deputy Director General and SDG Focal Point	Min. of National Planning and Infrastructure
21	Hussain Alim Shukoor	Manager	Maldives Islamic Bank
22	Ahusan Jameel	Senior Officer (Marketing)	Maldives Islamic Bank
23	Ahmed Zeenad	Managing Director	SDFC
24	Fathmath Haifa	Credit Analyst	SDFC
25	Sofoora Ali	Assistant Credit Analyst	SDFC
26	Fazleena Fakir	Managing Director	BCC
27	Leena Abdul Jaleel	Chief Operating Officer	BCC
28	Mohamed Saeed	Manager (PR)	BML
29	Abdulla Waheed	CSR Coordinator	BML
30	Fathimath Saeed	National Coordinator	GEF SGP
31	Hussain Jauson Lomo	Programme Associate	GEF SGP
32	Raniya Sobir	NSC Member	GEF SGP
33	Dr. Mariyam Mizna	Former NSC Member	GEF SGP



## Summary of Discussions

### Meeting with Ministry of Fisheries, Marine Resources and Agriculture

*Dr. Aminath Shafia, Permanent Secretary and FAO Focal Point*

*Mr. Adam Manik, Deputy Director General, Fisheries*

*Ms. Aminath Lubna Assistant Director, Fisheries Management*

*Mr. Adam Ziyad, Compliance Director, Fisheries*

*Mr. Ismail Rasheed, Director, Agriculture Production and Product Diversification*

*Ms. Shafia Naeem Aquatic Pathologist, Maldives Marine Research Institute*

*Mr. Ali Amir, Director, Agriculture Training Extension and Adaptive Research Section*

### Key Discussions

- The current focus of the Ministry is with the Strategic Action Plan (SAP)
- GEF Focal areas must be ideally aligned with the SAP
- A lot of coordination related issues have been identified in GEF SGP implementation in the Maldives. There needs to be emphasis on streamlining with stakeholders and government priorities. Developing a country strategy is a good initiative.
- A key area of SGP focus in the fisheries sector can be community-based fisheries management.
- From the agriculture sector, safe chemical purchase and usage, ensuring records, proper documentation, handling waste, occupational safety, human health and environmental protection can be considered.
- Coconut revival and development of nurseries can contribute to land rehabilitation it can be done as a business model to develop a variety of crops. This is a priority as over 60% (estimated) coconut groves in the country are old.
- Another area that can be focused is to revive local or native varieties. A lot of hybrids are imported, and these key species are being lost. There needs to be regeneration work.
- Groundwater management is equally important. IWRM and RWH as well as improved irrigation practices are paramount and cross cutting.
- Ministry wants to promote agrobiodiversity (crops like sweet potato and taros specifically to go back to traditional foods)
- Under the fisheries sector, other areas that the SGP can provide synergies is through developing management plans for commercial fisheries, groupers, sea cucumbers or any other natural marine resource found in that island's jurisdiction. These can be complemented with data collection, monitoring and research.
- Fostering markets for local produce is also an area the ministry is interested to collaborate with. These would also depend on larger logistical efforts like transportation projects and infrastructure development work.
- Using innovative ways need to be promoted. Example can be producing fertilizers from fish silage. These are practices in islands like Hirilandhoo. Similar work can be done with kitchen waste.
- Mariculture projects are also prioritized. These include grouper maturation for commercial sale.

- Similarly, floriculture is an area that SGP can be aligned with the Ministry's work. These include growing trees for resorts that are being developed.
- Coastal protection plants is also currently in demand with new islands being reclaimed for tourism. (example sea lettuce. Coconuts).
- The ministry can provide support in
  - Training on how to do monitoring work
  - Data collection
  - How to do surveying underwater monitoring
  - Can provide agriculture related training
- It is important for SGP be awarded to tried and tested agriculture models.
- Ministry is no longer providing grants. All loans to fishermen and farmers are through SDFC.

### **Ministry of Gender, Family and Social Services**

*Ms. Fathmath Yumna, Deputy Minister*

*Ms. Mariyam Sidhmeen, Director, Gender Department*

### **Key Discussions**

- MOGFSS main focus is the SAP. It recognizes economic empowerment of women as a key policy area.
- Women and WDCS should be a focus of any grant scheme.
- With changes to Decentralization Act, WDCs will be given more agency and recognition.
- Women in islands require lot of support, these can include trainings on leadership, community work, financial and project management etc.
- Waste management is an area that women can contribute to at both household and community level.
- As per the SAP, the Ministry has created Community Social Groups in each island. They will take a more social prevention role but will act in community empowerment related work. It is unclear how these will perform as it's in a very initial stage.
- The CSG include education, health, police, WDC and FCSC representatives. It is a potential platform to work on improving social cohesion.
- Ministry is ready to provide technical assistance to gender sensitize project concepts, proposals, work plans and budgets.
- Ministry can also provide support circulate call for proposal

## **Meeting with Environment Department, Ministry of Environment**

*Mr. Midhhath Abdul Rasheed, GEF Operational Focal Point Representation*

### **Key Discussions**

- It is difficult to prioritize a certain area of the environment that requires most attention. All are equally important. Each sub-sector will have their own priorities.
- Under environment in general, biodiversity protection is a key priority. There is a manifesto pledge to have one protected area in each administrative atoll. It is in the SAP as well.
- The modalities in how to implement the above needs to be explored. It can be done centrally or through councils under the revisions to the decentralization act or both.
- Community conserved areas is a good model that has already been done before.
- Main work done in the Environment department include species management, protected area management, biodiversity conservation, biosphere reserves, policy setting, etc. the EPA does enforcement and regulatory functions.
- CCA must come from the Decentralization Act. Local level recognition can be given through a council declaration.
- Under air quality, planting, nurseries, coconut groves, coconut revival can be potential areas SGP can contribute towards. But there are issues like how people's lifestyles have changed and governance issues. Capacity is also an issue to think about.
- There needs to be regional focus in giving grants. There are very few projects in certain areas.
- The SGP needs to be tied with the empowerment programmes done by the youth ministry. People are hesitant to start due to low capacity.
- Chemical management is a new area that requires more streamlining within government. SGP can contribute to this area through projects in agriculture.

## **Meeting with Climate Change Department, Min. of Environment**

*Ms. Aileen Niyaz, Assistant Director*

*Ms. Mariyam Ana Hassan, Assistant Director*

*Mr. Mohamed Inaz, Project Manager*

### **Key Discussions**

- The Climate Smart Island Initiative is being developed following the UN summit. It includes multiple dimensions including environmental protection, climate services, food security, green tourism.
- Most climate related funding come for energy efficiency or livelihoods. Waste is a sector that is difficult to justify for climate change funds.

- The LCEIS project looks at setting standards and labelling. Its targeted at the whole of Maldives.
- A significant gap identified in climate change projects is loss and damage. There are no insurance schemes for locals. No risk pooling or seed funding.
- There are no grant schemes administered by the Ministry.

### **Meeting with Energy Department, Min. of Environment**

*Mr. Ahmed Ali, Director General*

*Ms. Shazeena Ali, Project Officer*

*Ms. Mariyam Fazleena Mustafa, Assistant Director*

#### **Key Discussions**

- The Ministry is working on gazetting revised regulations for net metering (?)
- All policies and regulations are done by the Ministry, MEA will do the implementation and set standards.
- SAP recognizes 88 days of fuel storage in all islands. This can be difficult in smaller islands. Underground storage can be considered but it will have environmental impacts and will be costly.
- A key area that SGP can contribute is to improve efficiency. Eg. LED lights, solar PVs.
- Another area can be to instil good behaviour in energy conservation.
- Current projects are POISED and ASPIRE under different funding sources

### **Meeting with UN Women**

*Ms. Fathimath Zuhana, Programme Analyst*

#### **Key Discussions**

- UN Women have provided technical assistance to GEF SGP in the past, in reviewing project proposals. Usually proposals submitted by women groups are weak.
- WDCs do not have financial resources to hire a consultant. They are at a disadvantage.
- Many proposals hold potential provided adequate support is given.
- Any additional support can be beneficial. These can be videos, notes, guidelines etc.
- Women led projects will be difficult to secure, unless support is given, and quotas are in place.
- There needs to be a gender focal point within NSC to ensure all these issues are addressed.
- Mobile outreach may be the best option to reach women. This can be done through mass SMS. UNDP is in a good position to leverage partnership with telecom service providers.
- Other ways to explore can be traditional means, that is to use mass media like TV and radio.

- Women need to also know that the call is coming in advance, so that they can prepare.
- There needs to be more tourism sector focus and linkage. Most women in manufacturing sector can improve livelihood through this sector.
- Another key area is in agriculture. Projects can focus on capturing local knowledge and experiences.
- Ideas also need to be given to stimulate projects in certain atolls.

## **Meeting with UNDP**

*Ms. Shamha Naseer, Programme Analyst, IGP*

### **Key Discussions**

- IGP's main focus areas are youth, access to justice, governance and gender.
- The current programme ends in 2020. The geographic focus is in Haa Alifu, Haa Dhaalu and Shaviyani.
- It is difficult to pinpoint areas where IGP can collaborate with GEF SGP, but potential areas include
  - Gender related training
  - Youth Co Lab
  - Miyaheli Social Innovation Camp
  - Eco Camp
  - Youth dialogue
- A possible way will be to include GEF SGP participants from Ha, Hdh and Sh into these platforms.
- IGP can also help circulate call for proposals in these atolls.

## **Ministry of Planning and National Infrastructure.**

*Ms. Aishath Saadh, Deputy Director General*

### **Key Discussions**

- Development of the National Development Plan is on the way, but it will take more work and time.
- SGP must focus on economic diversification that brings benefit to the people.
- A key area that support can be provided is development of proposals. The process must be simplified so that NGOs with varied capacities have an equal chance at success.
- Chance must also be given to improve basic project concepts and align with national priorities. This can be through telephone or review of concepts.
- The SDGs must be institutionalized or established as a mechanism for effective SGP delivery.
- A broader focus must be on regional development. How can SGP promote regional development work?

- The Spatial Plan lays out ground level services and infrastructure for regional development. This is being developed and will require cabinet approval.
- A gap in these works is how to address the ageing population. The ageing group needs to be recognized as a socially vulnerable group in these schemes.
- An important area for SGP can be mariculture, crafts, cultural revivment, which can all be linked with SDGs.

### **Meeting with Maldives Islamic Bank**

*Mr. Hussain Alim Shukoor, Manager, Marketing*

*Mr. Ahusan Jameel, Senior Officer, Marketing*

#### **Key Discussions**

- MIB do not have any grant scheme but has a Sadaqat Fund that can be used for social inclusion work.
- There are no set criteria for giving funding through this scheme. All the applicants need to do is submit a letter or proposal with supporting documents and implementation details.
- The fund cannot be used for any livelihood or income generating activities.
- An endorsement from the NSC can be considered while granting approval. It can be a potential scale up avenue.

### **Meeting with National Steering Committee**

*Mr. Midhhath Abdul Rasheed*

*Ms. Raniya Sobir*

*Ms. Fathimath Shehezinee*

*Dr. Mariyam Mizna (former NSC Member)*

*Ms. Fathmath Saeed*

*Mr. Hussain Jauson Lomo*

#### **Key Discussions**

- Potential stakeholders to discuss can include LUP section from Ministry of Planning and National Infrastructure and LGA.
- There needs to be a country impact assessment or evaluation to mark the 10 year of SGP in Maldives.
- A way to determine effectiveness is a project closing evaluation.
- Ministry of Youth, Sports and Community Empowerment has a grant scheme for NGOs that can be aligned with GEF SGP
- It is important to define 'women led grants'
- A special call can be administered to call for proposals from target groups like women, youth and people with disabilities.
- Another way is to have a separate grant for women.
- Scaling up is an important area to focus on in the CPS. Specifically, how can we develop a business model to take these projects to the next stage?

- CPS can also explore other platforms within UNDP such as Miyaheli to pitch their proposals.

## Meeting with Bank of Maldives

*Mr. Mohamed Saeed, Manager, Public Relations*

*Mr. Abdulla Waheed, CSR Coordinator*

## Key Discussions

- The FRESA account is an escrow account that the bank administers. It cannot be aligned with SGP for scale up.
- BML gives funding through its CSR under four themes.
  - Community Development
  - Education
  - Healthy Lifestyle and Sports
  - Environment
- Different methodologies are employed to give these funds. They are
  - **Through Atoll Branches:** each atoll branch has a cap on the funding they can give out to their community. There are 31 such branches. Potential applicants are NGOs, Councils, schools, WDCs. They can apply by submitting a proposal or letter. There are no standardization and each case are evaluated separately.
  - **Community Fund.** This has a cap of MVR 50,000. Only CBOs and NGOs can apply to this fund. It is given under four phases and five grants is given out as a maximum. The Bank is thinking to remove the cap, but it is not final yet. These projects are usually small and of shorter duration of maximum 3 months. Examples include Nellaidhoo community park.
  - **General CSR funding.** This is open to all Maldivian residents, NGOs, Schools, Councils, WDCs. There is no cap. All submissions is to the BML Marketing Department and is internally reviewed through an internal CSR committee of 5 members. Examples include plastic eradication project by Dhangethi.
- Additional loan schemes are also offered by the Bank that can be a potential scale up funding source. These include
  - **Personal Loans:** Eligible for people who are salaried earning between 4,000 – 60,000 per month. There is a 5-day processing time. Applicants do not have to declare why they are taking the loan.
  - **Green Loan:** With an interest rate of 11% both individuals and businesses can apply to this loan. There is need for collateral. It is given out for environment related work, usually renewable energy related projects.
  - **Demand Loan:** This requires mortgage and has an 11% interest rate. Applicants do not need to declare anything. Individuals may apply.
  - **Business Development Loan:** With a 12% interest rate, this loan is given out with a collateral in place. Usually for fisheries and agriculture sector, construction (usually homes)
  - **Lifestyle Loan:** Given up to MVR 100,000 without mortgage and up to 1.5 million with mortgage.

- **Micro Loans:** This has a 13% interest rate and has a cap of MVR 25,000. Usually given for informal or self-employed workers. The credit worthiness of the applicant is reviewed.

## Meeting with SDFC

*Mr. Ahmed Zeenad, Managing Director*

*Ms. Fathimath Haifa, Credit Analyst*

*Ms. Sofoora Ali, Asst. Credit Analyst*

## Key Discussions

- SDFC is implementing a mandate of the Economic Ministry
- Many loan schemes in ministries needs to be streamlined. SDFC was established to bring a more holistic approach to government funded financing.
- When different agencies have schemes, there are issues on consistency. Even now ministries want their own internal policies to be reflected while giving loans.
- Fisheries sector loans are usually given for Refrigerator Sea Water (RSW) System – to keep fish fresh until they reach buyers. It is a better option than ice.
- To date, 10 loans of RSW have been approved. MFMRA wants to increase to 50.
- In agriculture – 12 million yearmark, targeted things to be achieved.
- People usually don't come to scale up.
- An innovative project in Male' relating to agriculture is the Vertical farming project.
- Funds are given to SMES and by law, they have to be 100% Maldivian. Councils can be involved. Co-Ops can be eligible for funding. Private sector and local individuals are most eligible.
- Bank has not received a proposal for compost or fertilizer development. Chemical management requirements / protocols are not very familiar to SDFC.
- Livestock farming is also an area where no loan request has been received.
- It is important to have experience rather than an idea. Loans are given out to applicants with minimum 6 month experience in that field. There must be demonstrated capability. Other critical factors like secured land is important.
- A key area where technical support or training can be given is bookkeeping.
- SDFC has no published reports but they do send to PO and MoEnv. This is done internally at the moment.

## Meeting with Business Center Corporation Ltd (BCC)

*Ms. Fazleena Fakir, Managing Director*

*Ms. Leena Abdul Jaleel, Chief Operating Officer*

## Key Discussions

- BCC is a 100% state owned enterprise with 7 operational centres across the country.



- Areas of support include advisory services, proposal development, training, inspection.
  - BCCs are used for inspection for pre-disbursement inspection and monitoring by SDFC. This service can be extended to GEF SGP. It provides a cost-efficient method for verification and monitoring.
  - Training services include how to write business plans. Requirements for trainings is obtained ahead in start of year and they run certificate (not MQA certificate)
  - Other trainings include Tax related trainings or compliance needs.
  - Training modality is through atoll BCCs. Interested parties can request for a slot and is conducted in a classroom style. Travel cost is borne by the participant. Registration is free.
  - BCC is thinking about developing skill sets required for the market/industry. These are long term development plans
  - In-kind support that can be provided include giving training facilities, aid in bookkeeping, financial management, leadership, reporting.
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## Annex 3 – Key Interviews with Grantees

Due to time and budgetary constraints, a series of telephone calls were conducted to former grantees to get insights into their overall experience in grant implementation and their perceptions about the operationalization of the grants. Participants were identified through the GEF SGP team in UNDP. A series of questions (please see below) were asked and the responses computed and analysed. Two interviews were conducted with representatives from successful grants and one representative was contacted from a terminated grant to gauge responses.

During the interviews, grantees shared an overview of their respective project, the roles undertaken by them, challenges, support received for project implementation by the community, success and sustainability of the project. Based on their experience, the grantees highlighted opportunities for project expansion, lessons learnt and how better results can be achieved through SGP grants.

### Questions

1. Name of the project and grant amount
2. Year/cycle
3. What was the project about/what were the project objectives and deliverables?
4. What was your role in the project?
5. How did you hear about GEF SGP?
6. How was the application process? Was it easy or difficult? Who helped you develop the concept/proposals?
7. What did you think about the PCM workshop? Was it helpful? Is there anything that can be done to improve it?
8. During project implementation, what were the main challenges?
9. What worked very well for the project?
10. What are the lessons learnt?
11. Was it difficult to involve women/youth? How did you ensure their involvement?
12. What kind of support can GEF provide to make project implementation easier?
13. What happened to the project after it was completed? Was it sustained? If so, how?
14. Was the project not sustained? Why?
15. How can UNDP improve its reach? How can more people find out and learn about SGP?
16. Which way do you think is best to select the landscape and seascape? Should Maldives be one landscape, as it is now, or should the landscapes and seascape be selected based on the environmental significance of a particular region or atoll?
17. What are improvements you observed in the community due to the project/did people implement things learnt from the project in their lives?

## Tabulated summary of key grantee interviews

	Name	Project/s	NGO/CSO/CBO
1	Ahmed Ziyau	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Switching to Renewable Energy for Climate Change Mitigation;</li> <li>• Changing Attitudes Towards the Adoption of Renewable Energy</li> </ul>	Vaadhoo Association for Future Development
2	Hulwa Khaleel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gathering of local knowledge on harvesting and storing of Kandoo as a staple food;</li> <li>• Conserving Kelaa's Kandoofa – Opening the Door to Nature for People with Disabilities.</li> </ul>	Island Development and Environmental Awareness Society
3	Hussain Fayaz	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of Solid Waste Management System</li> </ul>	Community Aid

## Summary of Interviews

### Interview with Vaadhoo Association for Future Development

*Mr. Ahmed Ziyau*

#### Key Discussions

- The VAFD's proposal to SGP grants was to install solar panels in the council office. Along with the goals of reducing GHG emission, the cost benefits successful project implementation will bring to the community such as cutting down the cost of maintenance, staffing and fuel for the island engine house was recognized.
- Awareness programs regarding energy efficiency to households and stakeholders in the Raa. Vaadhoo constituency: Raa. Hulhudhuffaaru, Raa. Angolhitheem, Raa. Vaadhoo, Raa. Rasgetheem and Raa. Alifushi were conducted. Alongside that the locals of Raa. Vaadhoo island were trained on installation, maintenance and repair of solar panels.
- The outcome of the project was better than predicted, the solar panels produced access energy, which was used to supply electricity to the waste disposal site in the island through a grid connection. The solar panels produce

24 kw of power during peak hours and caters for 100% of the electricity needs of the council office during the day.

- Grantee found out about the SGP grant from the news and also through emails received. UNDP maintains close contact with the NGOs. The associations functioning in the field also operates as a good network for information dissemination.
- The application process was very basic and submitting the proposal was not a difficult procedure.
- As party to both the council and the association, the informant provided support required from the council, assisted in preparing the proposal and all required effort to acquire the grant. During project implementation, he provided help in the process of sourcing the material, organizing project activities and completing the administrative work.
- The Project Cycle Management workshop was very helpful. The workshop taught the participants project design, budgeting and project management.
- The government regulations and procedures regarding renewable energy sources and installation proved to be challenges for the project implementation. The change in government's energy guideline mid project, created challenges for the project team as well.
- Other challenges highlighted included lack of technical expertise on the grantees side which resulted in a weak concept and subsequent challenges in procurement.
- The respondent further cited operational difficulties such as not having a USD Account which led to delays.
- When the association was to receive the grant funds, they did not have a USD bank account, therefore received the funds in MVR. Later when it was required to procure the project materials from international suppliers, they were unable to find enough foreign currency. The issue was solved by collaborating with the Ministry of Environment.
- The association received immense support from UNDP to resolve the challenges faced during the project.
- With the initial project, those involved were able to gain a lot of knowledge and relevant expertise required to conduct a similar project.
- Due to the success of the first project, the association is now proceeding with a scale up project.
- Due to the high levels of physical activities required in the installation of the solar panels, it was mostly male youth of the age range 30-40 years directly involved in the project activities.
- Revising the procedure to release the final payment as a refund can enable smoother and more efficient project implementation. Being small NGOs and associations based in islands, acquiring 10% of the total project funds with own means is not within their capacity.

## **Interview with Island Development and Environmental Awareness Society**

*Ms. Hulwa Khaleel*

### **Key Discussions**

- The NGO carried out two projects under SGP. The first project included a complete biodiversity survey of the mangrove in Haa Alif. Kelaa. The findings of the study were disseminated through infographics and video footages.
- The second project was an extension of the first project. This project aimed to increase accessibility of key areas of the island, including the mangrove area for people with special needs. They cleared the area and path to the mangrove, build wheelchair access and toilets.
- The exact source of initial news regarding SGP is unclear, but likely mediums are social media, social connections or word of mouth.
- The application process was not a matter of concern as the team involved comprised of members with higher education and many years of experience in the field.
- The Project Cycle Management workshop was very helpful and the project leaders tried to involve the peripheral team as well because similar learning opportunities are very rare.
- Interviewee's role in the first project was as the Project Manager and then as a volunteer for the second project.
- It was noted that the project timeline and deadline did not match or coincide with the school calendar. Due to this reason some project components were delayed. Political activities such as council and parliamentary elections also halted the project activities. These factors were not considered when proposing the timeline. Additionally, the team members found it challenging to match their availabilities with the project timeline. This was also a challenge that had to be overcome.
- During project implementation the team discovered the British military base in Haa Alif. Kelaa from world war 2. This uncovered several historical and cultural findings.
- The most notable success of the project was that their research and project efforts contributed to the mangrove being declared a protected area of the country in early 2019.
- It was very easy to get the locals to participate in the project activities. The Women Development Committee and local women of the island were involved from the beginning of the project in project activities. This was a main contributing factor to the high amount of support and enthusiasm received from the locals for project implementation. The locals were also included in the decision-making level. Alongside that, the council was also very supportive.
- For better project management and implementation, it is important to have minimum one project staff hired, full time.
- Monthly check-ins by UNDP can be helpful to keep the project team on track of the project timeline.

- There needs to be better communication and coordination between UNDP and project teams. This can help avoid errors and confusion and help save money, time and resources.
- Varying levels of expertise are present in NGOs. Instead of promoting “new and innovative” ideas, a better approach would be to show them examples of successful projects, the implementation experiences and knowledge gained and encourage replication of these projects in different communities. SGP is a precious opportunity for the island community’s and their really passionate small NGOs and councils.

In addition to projects which set out successful examples of project implementation, the input of grantees of terminated projects was also considered important. As such, project leader of Development of Solid Waste Management in Gaaf Dhaal Hoadedhdhoo was interviewed. This project was terminated before completion.

### **Interview with Community Aid**

*Mr. Hussain Fayaz*

#### **Key Discussions**

- The island of Gaaf Dhaal Hoadedhdhoo is a very ecologically significant island. It has abundant natural resources in the island such as mangroves, wetlands and beaches. The wetlands act as a carbon sink and the natural habitats support a rich biodiversity of various plants and animal species.
- People were not aware of the significance of these sites and it was used for years as a dumping ground. The project was undertaken with the belief the community has a responsibility to protect and conserve these areas. The several years of dumping had caused several negative impacts to the living organisms in these areas.
- The SGP plays an imperative role in the growth of small NGOs and is a major support system for them. SGP is especially significant for the scattered islands of the Maldives.
- As part of the project surveys and awareness campaigns were conducted. They initiated waste segregation at the household level in the island. As part of this, the project team provided the households with waste bins for waste segregation.
- The project included the component to build a waste disposal area in the island in order to mitigate the issue of waste dumping in the mangrove, wetland and beach areas. Unfortunately, due to administrative delays, the grantees were unable to undertake the activity in due time, which lead to the GOM taking over the building of the waste disposal area in the island.
- More focus and priority should be given to NGOs that are new to the field of managing and conducting environment related projects.