



## **Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) Subcommittee**

**Meeting no: 09**

***Noo Raajje Program***

**Summary Minutes**

**Date:** Wednesday, 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021

**Time:** 09:00 am – 10:40 am (Maldives Time)

**Venue:** *(Virtual)*

**Attendees:** 22 participants *(Refer annex for the virtual attendees list).*

**Meeting Chaired by:** Munshidha Ibrahim, Ministry of Fisheries, Marine Resources and Agriculture.

*(MSP Subcommittee meetings are co-chaired by the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Technology, Ministry of National Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, and the Ministry of Fisheries, Marine Resources and Agriculture on a rotating basis).*

### **Welcome Remarks & Meeting Minutes Recap**

The Chair, Munshidha Ibrahim, opened the meeting welcoming the members of the ninth MSP Subcommittee and providing a brief overview of the meeting agenda.

Maesha Mohamed, Administrative Coordinator of *Noo Raajje*, provided a quick recap of the previous meeting minutes, during which the MSP Compendium goals were discussed. She asked the members to review and comment on the draft minutes, which were shared via a Google document link, by Tuesday, June 6th, 2021.

### **Presentation of Updates to the Compendium Work**

The chair then handed over to Dr. Shaistha Mohamed, the Consultant for developing the MSP Compendium for *Noo Raajje*, to present the updates to the compendium work that had been done.

*(Presentation attached)*

Dr. Shaistha provided the updates to the MSP Compendium, including details on additional documents that were reviewed following the discussions during the eighth MSP Subcommittee meeting. She noted that no new goals have been added to the **Draft MSP Compendium Goals document** *(link in annex)*, but details of the reviews have been included (in red) along with the additional references to the document.

Members asked a few questions following Dr. Shaistha's presentation. The questions and answers were as follows.

Ilham Atho Mohamed of the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, and Technology asked how the MSP Compendium Goals and Objectives of this exercise will be used in comparison to the existing goals and objectives of other documents such as the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) etc, and whether the MSP Compendium Goals and Objectives will be separate from existing national goals and objectives. will be a separate exercise for MSP goal and objective setting.

Waitt Institute's MSP Director, John Weber explained that this exercise is essentially identifying the goals for the Maldives' offshore MSP; some of the discussions have suggested changing and/or adding to some of the goal languages specifically for the purposes of identifying goals for this MSP effort, building on the commitments outlined in the MSP Compendium and those made by the Maldives.

*Noo Raajje* Site Manager, Fathimath Nistharan (Nisthu) noted that the compendium is based on national goals and objectives, and the goal of this exercise is not to add to them, but rather to frame the Maldives' MSP.

Ilham went on to explain that the NBSAP and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) are national strategies that have been adopted at the national level for biodiversity and climate change, etc, and that they will continue to be the main documents for national goals and objectives. Bringing in those goals and targets from those documents and developing goals and objectives specific to biodiversity, species, climate change, and other areas where there are already goals and objectives may not be the best option; instead, develop goals and objectives that are more relevant to the Maldives' MSP.

John responded by saying that the purpose of this exercise is not to redo something that has already been adopted, but rather to inform those working on the MSP that there are other projects/programs that are directly or indirectly related to the MSP work. Part of this effort entails ensuring that the subcommittee members are informed and are using pieces of existing programs that make sense to the MSP and those that may be adopted, slightly changed, or may not be related at all. MSP would be its own document or policy for the Maldives, but it would undoubtedly be related to other existing programs. Existing programs will certainly continue, and the MSP may benefit from them or vice versa.

Aisha Niyaz of AishaNiyaz Consulting inquired whether the Decentralization Act referred to was the recently amended bill or the initial Act from 2010. Dr. Shaistha clarified that the most recent amendments to the Decentralization Act had also been reviewed.

## **Breakout to Review, Adapt/ Select Goals**

John described how the breakout room sessions will be carried out and organized, noting that each room will have a facilitator to take notes and answer questions, as in previous meetings. Nisthu then opened the breakout rooms instructing the members to choose one of the four breakout rooms and alternate between them as desired. The four breakout rooms were as follows:

- Breakout Room 1, facilitated by *Noo Raajje* Program Coordinator Moosa Zameer Hassan: Culture and Heritage theme, and Tourism theme.
- Breakout Room 2, facilitated by *Noo Raajje* Site Manager Fathimath Nistharan (Nisthu): Climate Change theme, and Fisheries theme.
- Breakout Room 3, facilitated by Waitt Institute's MSP Director John Weber: Development and Services theme, and Resource Management theme.
- Breakout Room 4, facilitated by *Noo Raajje* Administrative Coordinator Maeesha Mohamed: Biodiversity and Ecosystems theme, and Species theme.

The 9th MSP Subcommittee meeting continued to discuss and brainstorm the MSP Compendium Goals. Discussions took place in breakout rooms, and feedback was incorporated into the shared **MSP Compendium Goals document** (*link in annex*).

## **Report Back on Breakout Rooms**

At 10:15 AM (Maldives time), the members reconvened in the main room for discussions after 55-minute discussions in the breakout rooms.

Since the 9th MSP Subcommittee meeting continued to discuss and develop the MSP Compendium Goals, the discussion summarized below is a continuation of previous meetings' discussions.

*Breakout Room 1: Culture and Heritage, and Tourism goals.*

Moosa Zameer Hassan, *Noo Raajje* Program Coordinator, facilitated Breakout Room 1 and provided an overview of the discussion.

- In regard to Culture and Heritage, the members suggested that, in addition to enacting regulations, behavioral change of fishers toward sustainability should be set as a goal. It is not enough to just have regulations; they must also be effectively enforced and monitored. It ultimately comes down to individual behavior, thus there should be a goal to represent that.
- Members discussed how the goals for tourism should include the importance of local food as a sustainable eco-tourist product, as well as the trickle-down effects on sustainable livelihoods.

- Promote ecosystems such as mangroves and seagrass ecosystems as high-quality tourism experiences.
- Members also discussed the ineffectiveness of the current EIA process and the need to create goals to enhance the EIA process in order to ensure the ecosystem integrity during the development process.

*Breakout Room 2: Climate Change, and Fisheries goals.*

*Noo Raajje* Site Manager Fathimath Nistharan (Nisthu) facilitated Breakout Room 2, and she provided an overview of the discussion.

- Members discussed the significance of acknowledging the climate emergency as defined by the law and act, as well as the need to reflect the language in the goal. It was noted that a key element of local community involvement was missed out and should be included.
- It was also noted that there is need to acknowledge sea level rise, as well as the need to integrate more nature-based solutions, particularly to alleviate rising heat stress.
- It is suggested that the term "fisheries industry" be replaced with "fishing communities," in order to build resilient food and livelihood security by empowering fishing communities to meet vulnerability challenges and increase its contribution to a sustainable blue economy.
- Suggested to use "renewable energy" rather than "alternative energy".
- Incorporate the Marine Pollution Act and address pollution control issues such as garbage disposal by marine vessels, especially on port islands.
- Members also discussed potential fishing zone forecasting and reducing the length of the fishing operation, which would not necessarily be a form of alternative energy. Increasing efficiency through the use of sustainable technological tools in addition to alternative energy was also discussed.
- The role of women in fisheries was emphasized for the fisheries goals, and potential for sustainable fisheries markets were also discussed.
- Discussed the potential of enhancing market access by facilitating third-party agreements between resorts and local fishers.
- Discussed the need to consider discarded fish waste that can be used to make products other than those for human consumption.

*Breakout Room 3: Development and Services, and Resource Management goals.*

Waitt Institute's MSP Director John Weber facilitated Breakout Room 3. He summarized the discussion in the room.

- The importance of addressing marine pollution from all potential sources, including marine debris, land-based sources, marine transportation, and so on, was highlighted.

- Members had a lengthy discussion about integrated development planning and resource management. It was emphasized that the goals should be wide in nature, encompassing integrated, cross-sectoral planning. The importance of shifting away from the current fragmented approach to development planning was stressed. Members expressed a need for MSP to represent the marine framework in an integrated manner, taking into account various geographic scales (national, regional, local importance of developments) and perhaps help move the direction towards an integrated approach more broadly.
- Questions were raised about whether the MSP process integrates resource management/development issues/processes with biodiversity/conservation protection. Questions were also raised about how to reconcile some of the issues/links to goals, as some themes may conflict with others.

*Breakout Room 4: Biodiversity and Ecosystems, and Species goals.*

Maeesha Mohamed, *Noo Raajje* Administrative Coordinator, facilitated Breakout Room 4, and she invited Ilham Atho Mohamed to provide an overview of the discussion.

- Some members pointed out that these goals are already addressed in the goals of other documents (such as the NBSAP, NDC, and Climate Change Act, among others), and that some of the goals identified by members as missing are already covered in other documents but are not reflected in MSP goals. If such goals need to be altered, they must be changed directly in those documents.
- A member also suggested that rather than repeating the existing NBSAP goals in this document, this document could focus on areas of high biodiversity that we need to focus on and have a deeper understanding of.
- The need of ensuring that MSP goals do not conflict with or disregard the goals/objectives of NBSAP and NDC etc. was emphasized.
- Members discussed the term "traditionally important" species and suggested that the word "keystone species" could be more relevant.
- Emphasized the importance of having a proper definition for 'invasive' and 'alien' species.
- It was suggested that a goal be added to conserve and recognize species with slow reproduction rates.

**Wrap Up, Action Points & Closing Remarks**

Nisthu indicated that the MSP principle, goals, and objectives are still being refined and will be presented and discussed with members further before finalizing the language and other aspects of it. Therefore, she encouraged members to provide feedback and suggestions to improve the language on the shared document.

As asked in the previous meeting, John and Nisthu assured the members that a workplan timeline will be provided with them. John added that one of the next steps in this MSP process would be to

synthesize feedback on the principles and goals and bring it back to this subcommittee for further discussion, essentially to ensure that the members' feedback on those principles and goals has been fully captured.

Nisthu proposed shifting the MSP Subcommittee meeting time to the evening if the members agreed. The program secretariat will reach the members to coordinate a convenient time.

Munshidha concluded the meeting with brief remarks encouraging the members to provide feedback on the shared document and thanking the attendees for the productive discussions.

**Annexes:**

1. Attendees' list
2. Link to **MSP Compendium Goals** (working document for feedback)
3. Updates to the MSP Compendium Presentation
4. Final meeting minutes of the 8<sup>th</sup> MSP Subcommittee meeting

*Noo Raajje* Program Secretariat  
10/07/2021