



Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) Subcommittee

Meeting no: 05

Noo Raajje Program

Summary Minutes

Date: Thursday, 15th April 2021

Time: 10:00 am – 11:00 am (Maldives Time)

Venue: (*Virtual*)

Attendees: 33 participants (*Refer annex for the virtual attendees list*).

Meeting Chaired by: Munshidhaa Ibrahim, Ministry of the Fisheries, Marine Resources and Agriculture

(MSP Subcommittee meetings are co-chaired by the Ministry of Environment, 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, Munshidhaa Ibrahim commenced the meeting at 10:05 am Maldives time, welcomed the members for the fifth MSP Subcommittee, gave a brief overview of the meeting agenda, and gave a few more minutes for additional participants to join.

Noo Raajje Administrative Coordinator, Maesha Mohamed highlighted that the previous meeting's minutes have been shared via google document link and if any comments and feedback are there to send in by next Thursday, 22nd April 2021.

Presentation on MSP Principles, Goals and Objectives

(Presentation attached)

Fathimath Nistharan (Nisthu), Site Manager for the *Noo Raajje* program, gave a quick recap on what has been covered so far in the previous meetings. She then presented on the Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) Principles, Goals and Objectives, the definitions, and the need for it. She acknowledged that the MSP Subcommittee members may be familiar with the MSP process and the definitions, but the intent of these explanations is to ensure that all the members are on the same page of how these are being defined in the context of the *Noo Raajje* MSP process.

Following Nisthu's presentation, Waitt Institute's Science Director Andy Estep explained the Prioritization Modeling and the tools that will be used in the MSP process, how it works and highlighted some of the important limitations about the prioritization modeling.

Following a recap of the MSP process, Nisthu added that the MSP Compendium and the Coastal Development and Infrastructure Characterization work that is currently underway, along with the Ocean Use Survey would support this process in defining the principles, goals, and objectives. She then reiterated the proposed timeline for this MSP process.

Q&A and Discussion

After the presentation, Munshidha opened the floor for discussion and questions for which answers were provided by the Program and Government representatives.

Hawwa Raufath Nizar from the Ministry of Fisheries, Marine Resources and Agriculture (MoFMRA) highlighted the importance of considering the principle of equity and the need to include equitable distribution of resources in the process.

Andy clarified that the principles, goals, and objectives that were presented was only some of the examples and the members are welcome to suggest any principles, goals, and objectives that are meaningful to them. The MSP Compendium will be completed by mid-May which will be a reference document that will indicate any principles, goals, or objectives that are relevant for MSP or the conservation in the Maldives.

Q1. Most of these examples are looking at technical/biological aspects. Will the project be looking at social aspects up front rather than later?

Hudha Ahmed from Renewable Energy Maldives Pvt Ltd posed the question whether the project will consider the social aspects and Andy responded that it is up to the MSP Subcommittee to decide. He noted that it is certainly possible to map these things as long as there are data for looking at social aspects of the MSP.

As a follow-up question, Dr. Mizna Mohamed from ENDEVOR asked how the modeling considers the socioeconomic aspects. Andy explained that the model can take the socioeconomic aspects into consideration either as a priority or a cost depending on the objective. For example, if there is a good map of priority artisanal fishing grounds or subsistence fishing grounds that are known to be used, there is a certain cross-section of the population that are depending on these for their day-to-day living, then these fishing grounds would be prioritized maintaining over any other activity that the area could be zoned for that might be incompatible with that use.

Hudha raised her concern that in most of the PA work or conservation work that has taken place in the Maldives, the fisheries sector stakeholders or the resource extractors have taken the cost. She highlighted that, in defining these criteria or objectives those people need to be involved upfront rather than later. Further noted that in most cases, the technical people come up with a plan and by the time the resource users who are affected by the plan are consulted, it is a bit too late and suggested to involve those resource users at the outset.

Responding to Hudha's concern, Andy noted that there are several consultative elements within the *Noo Raajje* program and some of the considerations that need to be made in terms of how best and when to consult with the stakeholders for MSP, the MSP subcommittee would be expected to provide expert opinion on the aspects of the planning and the design of the MSP that should go out to who. He then asked whether it is a good starting point when the first draft of principles,

goals and objectives are developed, to figure out what the public think about it as the guiding light for the MSP or whether it is better to go around and gather priorities from the communities and use that to inform the planning. With the MSP Compendium the program is hoping to understand not only the commitments that have been made but also to look where the issues are being discussed commonly and the lessons that have been learned. He agreed that the more involvement and buy-in there are from the stakeholders the better off the plan would be.

Agreeing with Hudha's proposition, Dr. Shiham Adam from the International Pole and Line Foundation (IPNLF) said that this should be ground-truthed with the real users (stakeholders) and cannot be purely an academic exercise.

Adding to the discussion, Dr. Mizna said that for stakeholder engagement, rather than consulting general stakeholders, the direct and indirect users who are within a specific locality of planning should be engaged with and should not assume homogeneity among all localities. Clarifying this, Nisthu said that the idea is to engage all the specific stakeholders. She explained that the Ocean Use Surveys are being designed to target various stakeholders at all these levels and it is not just for the general public but rather hope to target cultural use stakeholder and other specific stakeholders to understand how much and for what purposes those areas are being used. These will be done using various tools including Maptionnaire and SeaSketch so that they can identify those areas and give weightage to how important those areas are. Local councils will be engaged in the process as well to identify the target groups.

Hawwa from MoFMRA agreed with Hudha as well and added that it is key for indicators for socio-economics to consider dependency on resources in terms of both livelihood and sustenance for local communities.

Q2. Would it be possible to integrate future climate change scenarios and resiliency of the reefs to this prioritization modeling?

Muhsina from the Ministry of Environment asked the question and Andy explained that with any of this it's a matter of defining what the goal or objective is. If a goal or a principle is factoring climate change scenarios into the plan, it will be modeled based on what the priority scenarios would be, and could seek guidance from climate change experts on the best scenarios to factor into this sort of process.

Q3. Does the MSP model take into consideration areas with unique surf breaks / protecting them? Specifically, areas with unique topographic features that pick-up swells.

Yaman Ibrahim from Water Solutions Pvt Ltd asked the question and Andy further emphasized that anything where there is data or information either from scientific studies or from stakeholders that indicate such places, it is possible to map them and make them a priority. Suggesting and setting these priorities are up to the MSP Subcommittee and the stakeholders.

Q4. As climate change adaptation is a priority, could zones be allocated to monitor how natural islands/ zones adapt to rising sea levels vs modified islands?

The question was by Shaha Hashim from the Maldives Resilient Reefs and Andy explained that research zones have been a topic at other sites that they have worked in as well and it is certainly

possible to do it by reserving some natural islands or spaces to understand how they are adapting vs modified islands.

Shaha also asked when the scientific expedition reports could be shared with the sub-committee, to which Andy responded that the report from the 1st two legs of the expedition will be available in May (the report is currently with the designer). He noted that the report will come along with a packet of data products, i.e., summary data, raw data and imagery which will be held by the Maldives Marine Research Institute.

Action Points & Closing Remarks

The next meeting is planned to be held Mid-May when the MSP Compendium is ready so that the principles, goals, and objectives setting can be built upon.

Nisthu welcomed any participants who would like to share any datasets to inform the MSP process.

The meeting was concluded with short remarks by Nisthu and Munshidhaa who thanked everyone for their attendance and good discussion.

Annexes:

1. Attendee list
2. 5th MSP Subcommittee Meeting Presentation Slides
3. Final meeting minutes of the 4th MSP Subcommittee meeting

Noo Raajje Program Secretariat

04/05/2021