



Sustainable Fisheries Subcommittee

Meeting no: 01

***Noo Raajje* Program**

Summary Minutes

Date: Wednesday, 30th August 2023

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

Venue: (*Virtual*)

Attendees:

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| 1. | Munshidha Ibrahim | Ministry of Fisheries, Marine Resources and Agriculture (MoFMRA) |
| 2. | Dr. Ahmed Riyaz Jauharee | Maldives Marine Research Institute (MMRI) |
| 3. | Hussain Nasheed | Bodu Kanneli Masveringe Union (BKMU) |
| 4. | Abdulla Shakir | Maldives Fishermen's Association/ Blueyou Consulting |
| 5. | Dr. Mohamed Shiham Adam | International Pole and Line Foundation (IPNLF) |
| 6. | Shaha Hashim | Maldives Resilient Reefs/ Blue Marine Foundation |
| 7. | Robin Ramdeen | Waitt Institute |
| 8. | Pablo Granados Dieseldorff | Waitt Institute |
| 9. | Fathimath Nistharan | <i>Noo Raajje</i> |
| 10. | Maeesha Mohamed | <i>Noo Raajje</i> |
| 11. | Dr. Shaistha Mohamed | <i>Noo Raajje</i> |

Welcome Remarks

The meeting was commenced by the *Noo Raajje* Site Manager, Fathimath Nistharan, welcoming the members to the first meeting of the *Noo Raajje* Sustainable Fisheries Subcommittee and providing a brief outline of the meeting agenda, followed by the introduction of the members present.

Introduction to the *Noo Raajje* program and the Sustainable Fisheries Pillar of Work

(Presentation attached)

Members of the *Noo Raajje* Country Team, Fathimath Nistharan, Maeesha Mohamed (*Noo Raajje* Science and Communications Liaison), and Dr. Shaishtha Mohamed (*Noo Raajje* Stakeholder Engagement Strategist), gave an overview of the program pillars and goals and an update on the progress of the work on marine spatial planning, including the Ocean Use Survey and the stakeholder engagement efforts that have been carried out.

Waitt Institute's Sustainable Fisheries Director, Dr. Pablo Granados Dieseldorff, gave an overview of the *Noo Raajje* Sustainable Fisheries pillar of work, including the subcommittee's governance and the approach to achieving sustainable fisheries. He noted that the Blue Prosperity Coalition (BPC) works in Bermuda, the Azores, the Maldives, Vanuatu, Fiji, Tonga, Samoa, and the Federated States of Micronesia and highlighted the common key components that were found to be important in achieving sustainable fisheries management in these areas.

The participants were also presented with the work that has been done so far, including the development of a Maldives Fisheries Characterization Report and a Seafood Markets Study,

among others, which are also available to download at www.nooraaaje.org. The planned activities of work for the rest of 2023 through 2024 were also presented to the attendees.

Questions and Discussions

The floor was then offered for members to ask questions and provide feedback. Following are the discussions that followed.

1. Mohamed Shiham Adam from the International Pole and Line Foundation (IPNLF) inquired for further clarification on the Fisheries Transition Mechanism, which is one of the works planned for 2023–2024.

Dr. Pablo noted that this fisheries transition mechanism is something that needs to be further developed with the input from the *Noo Raajje* Sustainable Fisheries subcommittee, and it refers to different ways to adapt to the marine spatial plan when the marine spatial plan eventually comes into place and considers the potential management of certain fisheries. The idea is to use data from the Ocean Use Survey to see whether we can identify that there is a need to either maintain or change management, and with that, those that need to be compensated are referred to as being in 'transition'; however, the appropriate terms and mechanisms will be fleshed out with the input from the subcommittee members.

Further, it was noted that, given the conservation and management measures that are already in place by the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) for the management of tuna stocks, there is more space for development on the reef fisheries side of things. This work will be guided by the Ministry of Fisheries, Marine Resources, and Agriculture (MoFMRA) based on the current management schemes that may help *Noo Raajje* design whatever is needed for the reef fishery.

2. Noting that one of the issues that has been flagged as part of the client action plan in MSC certification work is the lack of a coherent and comprehensive national live bait management plan, Dr. Shiham therefore proposed for *Noo Raajje* to consider having a dialogue with MoFMRA on the development of such a plan.

Dr. Pablo noted *Noo Raajje* is open to having further discussion on how to approach it and help in any way possible.

3. Shaha Hashim from the Maldives Resilient Reefs asked for clarification on the program timeline and the specific role of the *Noo Raajje* Sustainable Fisheries Subcommittee.

Fathimath Nistharan explained that it is up to the members of this subcommittee to decide the frequency of the meetings. Dr. Shiham suggested having the frequency of the subcommittee meetings open to need-basis or meeting quarterly. Munshidha Ibrahim from MoFMRA supported the suggestion of meeting on a need-basis.

The program's Terms of Reference (ToR) detail the role of the *Noo Raajje* Sustainable Fisheries Subcommittee as below:

A **Sustainable Fisheries Subcommittee** will guide Fisheries assessment research, membership will be designed by the Steering Committee from its existing members and other stakeholders with subject area expertise as identified by the Program Administration, and it will be chaired senior representative of Ministry of Fisheries, Marine Resources & Agriculture. The sub-committee is responsible for providing recommendations to WI's Fisheries & Markets Director, the Steering Committee, and the MSP Committee on actions to complete *Noo Raajje* workplan objectives. In addition, the Fisheries Subcommittee provides specialized expertise to the Governance Committee to help translate Fisheries conclusions from *Noo Raajje* activities into legislative and regulatory outcomes.

Noo Raajje Sustainable Fisheries Subcommittee is a technical working group that –

- Attends Sustainable Fisheries Subcommittee meetings and keeps represented organizations informed
- provides technical input and guidance to the Governance Committee throughout the fisheries management processes
- discusses potential areas of work and helps establish priorities in keeping with the Maldivian Strategic Action Plan
- helps to define scope, support research, and provide review of relevant reports
- identifies and involves important public and private sector actors in Fisheries Subcommittee initiatives
- provides guidance to the *Noo Raajje* Program Administration to structure appropriate stakeholder consultation processes

The Sustainable Fisheries subcommittee will meet in accordance with the annual work plan.

4. Shaha further noted that one of the biggest challenges to fisheries management is the lack of monitoring and enforcement, especially in the reef and invertebrate sectors, and highlighted that there are good fisheries management plans in place now. Therefore, she inquired to clarify, in terms of the *Noo Raajje* workplan, whether there is any support provided for the implementation of those management plans.
5. Dr. Shiham suggests that the work of the *Noo Raajje* Sustainable Fisheries Subcommittee be driven by the MoFMRA and MMRI, or the relevant government agencies, with technical support from *Noo Raajje* and partners.

Dr. Pablo highlighted that there have been opportunities to engage with stakeholders in the fisheries industry. He noted that the Fisheries Markey Study, which was completed by the Key Traceability through *Noo Raajje*, was presented to the Maldives Fisheries Promotion Board, leaving its leadership in the hands of the Board and MoFMRA, and ensured that *Noo Raajje* is willing to provide further support where needed in expending or applying the work.

6. Dr. Shiham requested for the clarification on how the value-added alternatives for tuna and reef fisheries, that is in the *Noo Raajje* fisheries workplan 2023-2024, would translate into an action and what the next steps are.

Dr. Pablo noted that this is a work idea that is in the early stages of development and would like to have further discussion on this area.

7. Shaha requested clarification on the type of data that will be collected from the communities and what that might feed into, with regards to the community fisheries data collection and monitoring work, which is in the *Noo Raajje* fisheries workplan 2023-2024.

Dr. Pablo clarified that this is also a work in development but noted that there have been discussions with MoFMRA and MMRI and was exploring what could support the national fisheries management plans. He further explained that in the other BPC partner countries, due to the fish diversity and the amount of data that needs to be collected for reef fisheries, one of the most efficient ways found is to engage communities in data collection efforts, and this could also be applied in the Maldives. Pablo further explained several potential data points that can be collected and explained the two models that EmLab works with that rely on length, which are data-limited models that can project the population status and productivity status based on length. *(Details of the two models, JABBA and LIME, are attached in the annex.)*

He noted that, given the myriad of species of fish in the Maldives reef ecosystems, the hope is to trial monitoring and evaluation for selected species and see how it goes. In other countries, the case has been for commercially important species and food security species but reduced to a set of species.

Acknowledging the extensive data collection efforts that are already ongoing across the country by the government, private sector NGOs, academia, etc., he added that importance will be given to avoiding duplication of what has been done.

8. Shaha inquired if the proposed and ongoing work through *Noo Raajje* is a one-time effort or if the program is supporting the establishment of a longer-term system.

Dr. Pablo noted that the program's hope is that everything that is being implemented through *Noo Raajje* will continue and be extended through the government partners. He also noted that, especially for the Fisheries pillar of work, the program relies on the MoFMRA and MMRI for leadership and guidance.

Wrap Up & Closing Remarks

Nistharan and Munshidha closed the meeting with brief remarks by encouraging the members to reach out if they have any questions for the team and thanking the members for their time and contributions.

Annexes:

1. Copy of the Presentation: Introduction to *Noo Raajje* program and the Sustainable Fisheries Pillar of work
2. Copy of the [Maldives Seafood Market Study](#)
3. Copy of the [Maldives Fisheries Characterization Report](#)
4. Summary of examples of BPC fisheries work
5. Paper on the Just Another Bayesian Biomass Assessment (JABBA) (Winker et al 2018)
6. Paper on Length-based Integrated Mixed Effects (LIME) method (Ruddand and Thorson 2017)

Noo Raajje Program Secretariat

10/09/2023