

Noo Raajje Milestones

August, 2023

2023

- Provided an in-person update on the Noo Raajje program to the Joint Committee on Economic Affairs & Environment and Climate Change on March 14, 2023.
- SeaSketch generated a new Offshore draft which fulfills the goals and objectives of the full no-take areas set by the MSP co-chairs.
 - Awaiting endorsement from President's Office to share the draft with the Governance Committee for their approval to launch the public consultation process.
- Supported National Geographic Pristine Seas to conduct a third expedition in the remote southern atolls to fill data gaps and highlight areas for marine protection in February - March.
- Hosted the Kanduveringe Festival (or Ocean Users Festival) in Rasdhoo, North Ari Atoll.
- Presented the research findings of the OUS at the 7th International Conference on Social Research and Innovation by Villa College.
- Attended the Little Big Festival to celebrate World Ocean Day and World Environment Day.
- The National Geographic Pristine Seas expedition team collected footage and produced four short videos about the research areas and communities to inform the public of the need for MPAs and long term management.
- Took part in the partner signing ceremony to support Ocean Ambassador Zuvaan Masveriya (Saajin) on his journey around the Maldivian Islands.
- Attended the Coral Festival hosted by the Maldives Coral Institute in Addu.
- Developed the 2023 workplan between MoMRFA and Waitt Institute.
- Created a contract with Ocean Mind, who will develop a risk and capacity needs assessment to report to Maldivian stakeholders and create a Monitoring Compliance Surveillance strategy.
- Finalizing Stakeholder Engagement report
- Currently developing the strategy for coastal MSP engagement.
 - Includes a list of atolls to approach first, key stakeholders to engage, and a timeline to be shared with the President's Office and co-chairs.

2022

- Held a legal workshop to refine the National MSP Act
- Awaiting finalization from the Ministry of National Planning, Housing and Infrastructure,, President's Office, and Attorney General's Office of the draft bill.
- Contracted consulting firm, Key Traceability, to recommend opportunities to promote market access, explore the diversification of current products, and suggest frameworks for the development of mariculture resources.
 - Completed a final report of recommendations and a presentation of key findings for the Maldives Fisheries Promotion Board is available online: <https://www.nooraajje.org/program-materials>.

- EmLab conducted a modeling study to illustrate the potential impacts of climate change on fish stocks.
- Traveled with the Minister of Fisheries, Marine Resources and Agriculture to the Boston Seafood Expo North America to meet global fisheries sustainability experts.
- Shared a full Blue Economy Strategy report and a tentative prospectus to the government stakeholders
- Held a Governance Committee meeting in February to present an overview of and seek the endorsement of the Trunk & Branch Strategy.
 - The Blue Economy strategy is available online: <https://www.noorajje.org/program-materials>.
 - Suppliers include Blue Carbon, solar retrofit of marine vessels, aquaculture and vertical farming, floating solar and wave energy, sustainable fisheries, entrepreneurship and training providers as well as MPA monitoring and enforcement solutions.
- Waitt's MSP Director and Site Manager worked on a draft Offshore MPA network comprising at least 20% Maldives water.
- Conducted the OUS from December 2021 - November 2022 in person and online, representing over 25,000 ocean users across the country.
- Developed and approved an Offshore MSP stakeholder engagement strategy.
- Carried out Phase 1 of the consultation process and received feedback on the MSP process and program work.
- Presented updates on the MSP work and held discussions with fisheries sector stakeholders at Fisherman's Day events in Faresmaathodaa.
- Released three videos from the second scientific expedition on social media.
 - One video focused on the pivotal role of Maldivian women in marine science.
- Released 4 press releases, garnered 39 pieces of media coverage, participated in 12 media interviews, and published 138 social media posts to promote the OUS.
- Produced a short documentary showcasing the Blue Economy work accomplished so far in the Maldives.
 - The film premiered at the Coral Festival and is available online.

2021

- Conducted a second scientific expedition from March - April to complete the first-ever archipelago-wide assessment of the state of the Maldivian reefs.
- Released the final legal report, it is available at <https://www.noorajje.org/program-materials>.
- Formed the Noo Raajje Legal and Policy Committee, representing a cross-section of Government entities, to guide the drafting of a National MSP Act.
- EmLab began working closely with the Ministry of Fisheries, Marine Resources & Agriculture on a Fisheries Characterization, a collection of up-to-date information on the country's fisheries sector.
 - The Characterization has been completed and is available online: <https://www.noorajje.org/program-materials>.
- Launched a free online Blue Prosperity Maldives Training Program catered to Maldivians to advance ocean science through education.

- Administered the program to 128 individuals by the University of California, San Diego Extension and through five courses on the topics of coral survey science, marine spatial planning, blue economy, sustainable fisheries, and MPAs.
- Contracted a local Maldivian team to develop a Compendium of Marine Spatial Planning Targets relevant to the Maldives and to produce a Spatial and Temporal Characterization of Coastal Development and Infrastructure.
 - The Compendium and the Maldives Coastal Characterisation has been completed and is available online: <https://www.nooraaaje.org/program-materials>.
- Held thirteen meetings with the MSP Subcommittee to introduce MSP, provide input on goals, and review a work plan for developing the MSP.
- Finalized Principles and draft Goals & Objectives
- Facilitated training for 19 Maldivians from 10 different atolls to learn about the Noo Raajje program, SeaSketch software, and best survey practices prior to launching the OUS project.
- Contracted consulting firm, City Facilitators, to draft approaches to promote the Maldives' Blue Economy.
- Held a workshop in August with the government agencies to present and align the Blue Economy Development Strategy with government priorities to position the Maldives as a Blue Economy leader and prioritize the strategy's proposed working tracks.
- Based on a vote with the public servants and the ministers decided the priorities of the Maldives Blue Economy focus on the sectors of Nature, Food, Tourism, and Energy.
- Held a Governance Committee meeting in February to present an overview of and seek the endorsement of the Trunk & Branch Strategy.
 - The Blue Economy Strategy has been completed and is available online: <https://www.nooraaaje.org/program-materials>.
- Showcased the Blue Economy work at 2020 Expo Dubai.

2020

- Surveyed 127 sites across many Maldivian atolls distributed between inhabited and uninhabited areas of the Maldives in February.
 - The expedition provided a systematic snapshot of coral reef health, with a focus on spatial gradients and gradients of human resource use.
 - The report for the first expedition is available online: <https://www.nooraaaje.org/program-materials>
- Contracted two local Maldivian lawyers and a U.S. based ocean law expert to develop a legal assessment of the Maldives' existing legal framework relating to ocean management
 - The legal assessment is available online: <https://www.nooraaaje.org/program-materials>
- Collaborated with the Environmental Markets Laboratory (emLab) at the University of California, Santa Barbara, to review 7 Fisheries Management Plans developed under the Fisheries Act of the Maldives.
- Hosted a virtual public launch that was broadcasted on television and live on Facebook.
 - The launch received more than 40,000 views and can be accessed on Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?ref=watch_permalink&v=299122888177699
- Launched social media channels on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).