

## MARINE PROTECTED AREAS

In order to manage our ocean resources for the future, we need to protect our ocean through designating marine protected areas and sustainable management.

The program aims to fully protect 20% of our oceans. Marine protected areas serve fundamentally different, and complementary, purposes.

### Marine protected areas benefit fisheries.

- Can provide a refuge for targeted species, such as reef fish (e.g. bait fish), giving marine animals inside its boundaries time to grow larger, produce more offspring, and increase populations
- Larger, more mature fish will “spillover” into adjacent fishing grounds helping to stock fisheries

### Marine protected areas increase biodiversity and fosters resilience.

- Protection can impact large portions of entire ecosystems, helping restore and protect endangered species and important habitats
- The reserves are capable of bringing back life and restoring key processes like carbon capture and enhancing climate change resilience

### Marine protected areas benefit coastal economies.

- Sites for education and research
- Attractions for tourists
- Provide alternative livelihoods for communities



**NOO RAAJJE** is a 5 year program, led by the Government of Maldives, through a partnership with the Blue Prosperity Coalition.

The program focuses on providing sustainable, long-term solutions for safeguarding the ocean and its resources to build a bright future for all Maldivians.

## PROGRAM GOALS

- Enhance **fisheries** and protect **coral reefs**
- Improve **livelihoods and jobs**
- Sustainably **grow economies**
- Protect and restore **ocean health**

Noo Raajje is taking on a multifaceted approach to achieving a sustainable ocean economy for the Maldives.



### BLUE ECONOMY

Sustainable use of the ocean's resources to improve livelihoods, communities, economies and ecosystems



### MARINE SPATIAL PLANNING

A public process to better manage and balance uses of the ocean space.



### SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES

Strategies and tools to ensure that fisheries will be viable for generations to come.



### MARINE PROTECTION

Areas in the ocean where human activities are limited so marine life can regenerate

## MARINE SPATIAL PLANNING

Noo Raajje is developing a **Marine Spatial Plan** that is science-based, participatory and collaborative to ensure that the ocean can thrive for years to come.

The **Marine Spatial Plan** will be a legally binding, map-based plan that designates zones for different activities in the ocean space accompanied by a National MSP Act.

## BENEFITS OF A MARINE SPATIAL PLAN

- Balances economic growth with environmental protection
- Improved fishing and livelihoods
- Reduces ocean user conflict
- Healthier marine environments and increased resilience to climate change
- More opportunities for future generations

## PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

The program has conducted the following activities as part of the Marine Spatial Planning process:

- Conducted **2 scientific expeditions** covering **177 reef sites** across **20 atolls** to capture coral reef health and fish and benthic populations
- Carried out an **ocean use survey** across all inhabited islands, collecting **4,600+ responses** representing **25,800+ ocean users**
- Completed a legal & policy framework assessment and drafted the first **National MSP Act**
- **Continues to engage with key stakeholders** to keep them informed and obtain feedback throughout the process

## How is a Marine Spatial Plan developed?

The Marine Spatial Planning process is **science-based, participatory and collaborative**.

### 1. Process planning

A **working group**, including representatives of government, NGOs, research groups, and the private sector, was selected to plan and lead the process, led by:

- Ministry of Fisheries, Marine Resources and Agriculture
- Ministry of National Planning, Housing and Infrastructure
- Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Technology  
Environmental Protection Agency

### 2. Data collection and goal setting

The working group is carrying out this work:

- With **strong shared vision and clear goals** of what needs to be achieved
- Examining **best-available scientific data and information**
- Considering **stakeholder feedback**

### 3. Spatial analysis and drafting

The mapping process includes analysing how best to zone areas for different use, including protection, considering:

- How the ocean space is currently used
- Government priorities for oceans and its use
- Areas that have highest natural value
- Maintain economic and community livelihoods (e.g., fishing grounds)

### 4. Review and update MSP

The Marine Spatial Plan will be reviewed and updated at least once every 5 years.