



Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) Subcommittee

Meeting no: 11

Noo Raajje Program

Summary Minutes

Date: Wednesday, 1st September 2021

Time: 09:00 am – 10:50 am (Maldives Time)

Venue: *(Virtual)*

Attendees: 21 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, Ministry of Fisheries, Marine Resources and Agriculture, and the Environmental Protection Agency on a rotating basis).

Welcome Remarks & Meeting Minutes Recap

The Chair, Munshidha Ibrahim, commenced the meeting by welcoming the members of the eleventh MSP Subcommittee, and providing a quick outline of the meeting agenda.

Maesha Mohamed, Administrative Coordinator of *Noo Raajje*, provided a quick recap of the previous meeting minutes, during which the MSP Principles ranking exercise was carried out. She asked the members to review and comment on the draft minutes, which were shared via a Google document link, by Monday, 6th September 2021.

Presentation of MSP Goals Synthesis for Voting

(Presentation attached)

Waitt Institute's MSP Director, John Weber, began the presentation of MSP goals synthesis for voting, with a few reminders on what the MSP principles, goals, and objectives are seeking to achieve. He noted that the goals are intended to be rather high-level, broad general statements of intent, whereas the objectives would provide more detail and specificity. The next step will be to discuss the offshore MSP objectives in the forthcoming MSP Subcommittee meetings, which will build from the Maldives offshore MSP principles and goals, which offer the overall framework for what the Maldives offshore MSP seeks to accomplish. In addition, he stressed that for the time being, the focus is on the Maldives offshore MSP effort.

John summarized what had been done thus far and reminded the members that at previous MSP subcommittee meetings, the MSP goals were discussed in breakout rooms and feedback was captured. Those conversations were structured around the Maldives' current commitments and policies. As a reminder, the goals described in the MSP Compendium were organized by themes, with references to other laws and policies that expressed similar sentiments, as well as general goals that already existed in the

Maldives. He clarified that the intention is not to rewrite those, but rather to provide a starting point for the discussion about the offshore MSP effort.

John then presented the offshore MSP goals synthesis, highlighting that the comments made by members in the breakout rooms had been summarized and organized by themes. He highlighted that some of the remarks made in the breakout rooms were quite specific, and so have been acknowledged, but may not be in the goal statements because goals are, by definition, broad statements. He also noted that there were comments made where people had different viewpoints, which were captured, and he would encourage members to submit input if they favor one way or the other.

Members were then asked to read through the **summary document of offshore MSP goals**, rank the MSP goal statements, and provide any input so that the information could be compiled and forwarded to the *Noo Raajje* Governance Committee for consideration.

(Link for ranking goals for offshore MSP is provided in the annex)

Questions/ Feedback on the MSP Goals Synthesis

Ilham Atho Mohamed of the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Technology queried about the signoff procedure for the MSP goals, specifically whether they will be submitted as a proposal by the MSP Subcommittee to the Governance Committee for approval.

John agreed and further added that the Governance Committee, in their role as decision-makers, will be provided with recommendations from the MSP Subcommittee that is as clear and precise yet robust information about goals.

Ilham also raised her concerns about the composition of the Steering Committee and the MSP Subcommittee, noting that if there is to be voting to propose goals related to marine space allocation and resource use distribution within the Maldives' national waters, only Maldivians and local stakeholders should be permitted to vote.

Noo Raajje Site Manager, Fathimath Nistharan (Nisthu) reminded that the *Noo Raajje* Steering Committee and Subcommittees serve as technical advisory boards, and that the *Noo Raajje* Governance Committee, comprised solely of government ministries and agencies, will make any final decisions.

Recognizing the importance of involving the Maldivian communities, John added that the ongoing efforts are geared at creating a draft offshore marine spatial plan, which will then be circulated nationally for stakeholder and public input, review, and comments, with a tentative schedule of the end of 2021 to the beginning of 2022.

Hudha Ahmed of Renewable Energy Maldives, questioned why the importance of protecting the ocean for recreational purposes, referring to wave regimes of surfing locations, did not appear as a goal, when there are particular goals for invasive species, transport, and etc.

John acknowledged Hudha's comment and said that some members made that point under cultural heritage, but it is not in these sets of goals because the focus is currently on offshore MSP rather than coastal MSP.

In addition, he noted that in this context, the term "offshore" refers to the portion of the EEZ beyond 12 nautical miles offshore, and he requested members to provide comments if there are any concerns that they believe should be addressed in the offshore goals but are not.

Referring to the goal in 3.2 and the second goal under climate change in the notes, Fathimath Nadha of the Attorney General's Office highlighted that the Maldives do not have a Marine Pollution Act and requested clarification or elaboration, to which John asked whichever member made the comment in breakout room to elaborate it.

Hudha inquired whether, given what is being addressed is offshore, the reference to alternative energy refers to offshore resources, to which John responded that that is the assumption unless someone else wishes to clarify. He also mentioned that some members suggested in the comments that the term "renewable energy" is more appropriate.

Ilham commented that the proposed goals appear to be overarching in nature, and asked as to where MSP goals will fall in, or where they will be put in hierarchy, in comparison to the existing overarching Climate Change Goals and Biodiversity Goals.

In response to Ilham, John stated that it is one of the reasons why coordination with other existing programs/efforts/already-existing goals will be an important component of the MSP's development. There have been discussions about the importance of maintaining the relationship with such existing efforts, and the intention is for them to continue.

Ilham further said that in that case, the goals may need to be reconsidered because, based on the comments previously, the goals appear to be for the nearshore, and that the existing goals embrace all EEZ, including offshore and nearshore.

John mentioned that there may be some goals that certainly have a nearshore focus and that it would be useful to solicit member feedback on that, but there are also other goals that could be applied throughout the EEZ.

In reference to the goals under the Development and Services theme, Abdul Latheef Ali of Coast Guard/MNDF suggested that when developing floating infrastructures, consider navigational hazards. John responded to the suggestion by offering that it be made a specific objective under the relevant goal.

Ilham questioned the level of MSP in the hierarchy of national development plans, the planning process or the overarching decision making process, and if the proposed goals for a national development plan level planning through MSP, to which the *Noo Raajje* team agreed that a clarification would be offered later.

Presentation of Vote Results for the MSP Principles Synthesis

John presented the vote results from the previous MSP Subcommittee meeting's MSP Principles survey exercise.

(Presentation attached)

Recognizing previous meetings' discussions about the importance of climate change and how it needs to be front and center in these plans, John highlighted that it was heard loud and clear, and there are several places where that is reflected in these principles. He noted that while some of the principles may not use the term "climate change" verbatim, it would be reflected in the elements of the principles.

John concluded by reiterating that all of this information, as well as the results of the vote, will be presented to the *Noo Raajje* Governance Committee, which serves as the decision-making body and includes representatives from various ministries.

Wrap Up, Action Points & Closing Remarks

Reflecting on some of the timeline conversation from the last meeting, John highlighted that the outcomes of this MSP Subcommittee meeting will help frame the meeting agenda for subsequent meetings.

He anticipated that, over the course of the next couple of meetings, the work of the MSP subcommittee will be more focused on the objectives and get into the details of what is sought to accomplish through this MSP.

Munshidha then wrapped off the meeting with brief remarks thanking everyone for their time and contributions at every meeting.

Annexes:

1. Attendees' list
2. Link for **ranking goals for offshore MSP**
3. Summary document of the MSP goal statements
4. Results of the vote for the MSP Principles Synthesis presentation
5. Final meeting minutes of the 10th MSP Subcommittee meeting

Noo Raajje Program Secretariat
12/09/2021