
Atoll Ecosystem Conservation Project

Terms of Reference

National Consultant – Sustainable Livelihoods Specialist

No of Posts: 1 National Consultant (Retainer Basis)
Duration of contract: 2 Years (Agreement renewed every 12 Months)
Duty Station: Male', Maldives (with significant time on Baa Atoll)
Advertised on:
Deadline:

I. Background to the AEC project

The Government of the Maldives is undertaking a project on the conservation and sustainable use of globally significant biological diversity in the Maldives' Baa Atoll. The "Atoll Ecosystem Conservation (AEC) project" is co-financed by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and implemented through UNDP. In the Maldives, atoll ecosystems literally provide the basis for the country's existence as well as life-supporting services such as shoreline protection and goods upon which the economy entirely depends such as fish and tourism. However, social and economic change is altering consumptive behavior and livelihood strategies, outpacing institutional capacity and sectoral programs to adequately manage it. This in turn is threatening the natural endowment that is essential to maintaining the structure and function of atoll ecosystems, the viability of globally significant biological diversity, and the livelihoods and environmental security of the people.

Most important policy decisions affecting biodiversity are taken at the level of individual sectors, such as infrastructure, fisheries, and tourism. Government initiatives to manage change and mitigate the impacts caused by it are rooted in sector-by-sector approaches, resulting in narrow, sectoral institutions, policies, and interventions. The project's three-pronged strategy is to:

- mainstream the ecosystem approach to biodiversity conservation objectives into sectoral policies and programs and reinforce multi-sectoral institutional fora;
- establish a model system on Baa Atoll to conserve biodiversity "in the water" and "on the ground" through innovative national-local and public-private partnerships; and
- relieve livelihood-related pressure on biodiversity by enhancing reef fishery property rights and enabling local people to pursue more sustainable, alternative livelihoods.

By the end of the project, modified sectoral policies and programs will enable institutions to more effectively manage biodiversity. Government, local communities, and the private sector will be partnering to secure the long-term conservation of Baa Atoll ecosystems. And, local people will be applying new knowledge and accessing new sources of financing in pursuit of alternative livelihoods. Baa atoll will be a world class model for atoll ecosystem management

The 7th National Development Plan for the Maldives states that 5% of all reefs shall be protected by 2010. 30 Protected Areas have so far been designated (25 marine, 3 islands, 1 mangrove, 1 marine/terrestrial). Given the challenging commitment of NDP7, there is an urgent need to designate and bring into good management more (marine) protected areas.

Purpose of this consultancy

The benefits provided by reefs and marine resources to local communities are a key driver for the sustainable management of these globally important habitats in the Maldives. However the activities of local communities can also threaten or damage these resources.

The purpose of this consultancy is to ensure that the aspirations of local communities are fully embedded in the project, that local communities are involved in a participatory way and that local communities benefit from the results. Work will focus on three strands of activities: (i) supporting the development of a more sustainable approach to island living; (ii) establishing livelihood development support activities; (iii) piloting alternative sustainable livelihoods.

Description of tasks to be carried out

The selected consultant will provide targeted support to the following activities based on the project log-frame and existing work plans and consultancies to achieve the following goals for Baa Atoll:

1. Support the design and implementation of a livelihood development support strategy to operationalise the Atoll and Island Sustainable Development Plans.
2. Work with households, schools and specific resource user groups to develop charters for sustainable living, and promote their adoption.
3. Support local community engagement to declare Baa Atoll as a UNESCO designated Biosphere Reserve
4. Design and support implementation of up to 3 sustainable livelihood development support activities for Baa atoll (eg. options analysis, credit, business planning, employment centre, marketing, etc)
5. Design action plan and support implementation of up to 3 alternative sustainable livelihood options for local communities on Baa.
6. Support establishment of effective community conservation partnerships among Baa Atoll communities and with other reef stakeholders by bringing disparate groups together for effective long-term collaboration, including for marine protected areas.
7. Provide training to atoll and island level stakeholders (including locally recruited MPA managers) in participatory approaches to community-based management, livelihood development support and alternative livelihood options
8. Provide support to other activities as requested by the national project manager

The consultant will closely work with MEEW staff, the atoll administration and the staff of the Project Management Unit (both in Male' and on Baa atoll), and other national and international consultants. In particular, the national consultant will be "paired" with an international consultant who will provide "home-based" and short "on-mission" support and advice. Government co-financing will support staff of relevant Ministries and their institutes to work with the national Consultant. Co-financing will also be provided for training courses, workshops and materials.

Qualifications and skills required

The consultant should have a minimum qualification of MSc in relevant discipline, and be able to demonstrate significant high-level experience (minimum 10 years) in the following areas:

- Community-based participatory ecosystem management
- PRA and Rural development
- Marine Protected Areas management
- Relevant biogeographical and international experience
- Training and high level presentations
- Good inter-personal skills and ability to work independently and in a team
- Excellent report-writing skills (in English and Dhivehi)
- A highly strategic approach to working
- MS office and GIS capability
- Candidates from Baa Atoll, and women, are especially encouraged to apply

Detailed work plans will be agreed on a quarterly basis between the Project Management Unit and the consultant. The consultant will be paid according to the work done / outputs achieved against these plans.