



Building Resilience & Ending Vulnerabilities in SIDS

Joint Programme 2022 Annual Progress Report

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UNCT/MCO: Maldives

Reporting Period: 1 January - 31 December 2022

JP title: Strengthening National and Subnational Capacity for Sustainable Disaster Risk Reduction, Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation in Maldives

Stakeholder partner: National Government; Sub-national Governments;

Thematic SDG Areas: Climate action & energy transformation;

PUNOs: UNDP, UNESCAP

Total estimated expenditures: US\$ 120,000.0

Total estimated commitments (including expenditures): US\$ 137,000.0

Gender Marker: Gender-sensitive (for example, the JP acknowledged and aimed to address gender to enhance the policy/programme, such as undertaking gender analysis to ensure policies/programmes do no harm)

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Executive Summary

In the first year of the Joint Programme (JP), significant effort was invested in strengthening the coordination mechanisms at the national and subnational level. It was imperative that all stakeholders were aware and understood the goal of the Joint Programme, which was to create the enabling environment for sustainable Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation at the local level and how this in turn would inform their long-term local development plans, coordination mechanism, partnership and sustainable financing.

Therefore, in joint partnership between UNDP and UNESCAP, progress was made in the areas of UNSDCF 2022-2026 outcomes 3 and 4, and related to SDGs 11, 13, and 16. Specific results which the JP achieved in 2022 included enhancing the existing climate risk and disaster related data and information products (output 1.2) to support evidence-based policy making for DRR and CCA and stakeholders are equipped in their use and application in addition to improving the application of gender-responsive fiscal policy tools to support local council initiatives in DRR and CCA (output 2.1).

Additional results were also attained under output 1.2 which included creating a data report in October 2022 and undertaking consultations with Maldivian stakeholders, including the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and the Maldives Meteorological Service (MMS). The data report aimed at assessing the current state of the disaster-related data repository and identify potential data sources, while the consultations aimed to identify key requirements and next steps.

Further results were achieved under output 2.1 that included work on mainstreaming risk insurance with engagement of the local central bank. This led to the development insurance diagnostic study in Maldives (October 2022) to identify risk transfer solutions for climate change and disaster risk reduction along with recommendations on mainstreaming insurance in major industries to

strengthen financial resiliency and livelihoods in case of disasters. Under the same output, an extensive training was conducted which included 3 pilot programmes centred on the economic empowerment of women from various regions of the country. The trainings are ultimately expected to enhance the resilience of Maldivian communities to adverse impacts of climate change and disasters through fortification of women's livelihoods in the islands.

In 2022, efforts focused on establishing the cooperative platforms necessary to allow JP's multiple partners, including the LGA, Ministry of Finance (MoF), and the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), to participate. However, due to the existing commitments of the government partners, difficulties were encountered in implementing planned activities in 2022. To address this, the JP's first Project Steering Committee was held in December 2022, during which partners committed to integrating activities into their working plans and holding more frequent technical level meetings throughout 2023.

Annual Progress

Overall JP self-assessment of 2022 progress:

Satisfactory (majority of annual expected results achieved; 1 to 3 months delay in implementation)

Overall progress against 3 key results

Under Output 1.2, a data report has been prepared in December 2022 for the Maldives to understand the status of current disaster-related data repository and potential data sources for the project. Stakeholders' consultation has also been carried out with the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and the Maldives Meteorological Service (MMS) to identify key requirements, potential data sources, and next steps. During these consultations, it was suggested that the risk and land use maps of Maldives be updated and used by NDMA for disaster management policy recommendations, and that climate projection information be translated into action-oriented information and presented in a user-friendly way for policy making. It was also suggested to downscale climate projections to the atoll/island level and to include spatial information on critical infrastructure and safe houses in land use maps. The MMS consultation focused on the impact-based forecasting and warning service and its value for early warning and disaster risk reduction, as well as capacity building and coordination with the monsoon forum. The MMS also expressed interest in collaborating with the project on a real-time weather monitoring system and on capacity building for its staff.

Under output 2.1, contributing to UNSDCF 2022-2026, work was undertaken to mainstream risk insurance. UNDP partnered with the Central Bank of the Maldives - the Maldives Monetary Authority (MMA) to conduct an insurance diagnostic study in November 2022 to identify potential risk transfer solutions for climate change and disaster risk reduction in Maldives. The diagnostic study examined the existing legal and administrative frameworks for DRR/CCA in Maldives and provided recommendations on how insurance (e.g., nature insurance) can be mainstreamed in major industries to strengthen financial resiliency of industries and livelihoods in case of disasters. The diagnostic study has now been validated and following this study UNDP is partnering with MMA to develop a full proposal on insurance sector development in Maldives.

Also under output 2.1, a total of 65 women were trained on Economic Empowerment under 3 pilot programmes conducted in 3 geographical areas (Dhaalu, Kaafu, & Shaviyani Atolls) covering 26 islands/cities in the Maldives, contributing to UNSDCF Outcome 4 by assisting Women Development Committees (WDC) to explore pathways for economic empowerment, as well as to empower them to fulfil their mandate of facilitating women's economic empowerment in their respective communities. The main objective of this training was to enable WDCs to become enablers and supporters of women who seek opportunities for venturing into business environments in their respective communities. A comprehensive training curriculum was developed specifically for this programme, which comprises of 14 modules that cover legal and technical requisites for developing and sustaining businesses, and included sessions on ideation, planning, risk identification and resource mobilization. This programme was conducted in partnership with the Ministry of Economic Development (MED) and the Local Government Authority (LGA). Each programme was conducted over 3 days. The host islands selected for the pilot programmes were Dh. Kudahuvadhoo, Malé City, and Sh. Funadhoo. The participants included WDC members and women councillors participated and completed the training programme. A training of trainers (ToT) was also conducted prior to the 3 pilot programmes and personnel from UNDP, MED and the LGA were trained as facilitators.

UNCT collaboration was enhanced through periodic consultation with JP partners culminating in the first Project Steering Committee meeting that occurred in December 2022. While not all partners were able to attend in person, agreement was sought to hold more frequent working group meetings in the upcoming year (1 per month) in a bid to increase collaboration and synergy within the UNCT as well as amongst

SDG Acceleration progress towards the SDGs, focusing on the main SDG targets

- The JP targets to strengthen national and subnational institutions and community capacity to develop resiliency against the impacts of disasters, climate change and environmental degradation by
 - o Strengthening multi-level gender responsive integrated climate and disaster risk governance legal, regulatory, policy and strategic framework with detailed stakeholder's role and responsibilities and promote gender-responsive risk management (SDG targets 13.1 and 13.2)
 - o Strengthening the planning and execution of sustainable disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation activities at national and subnational level (SDG target 13.b)
- Data forms the backbone of risk assessment as knowledge and evidence are generated for improved policy and actions based on reliable data. Decision makers need accurate, disaggregated, relevant data which is accessible and easy to use for risk-informed development plans. In Maldives there is real dearth of reliable data. Moreover, sometimes the data is generated in silos and is not accessible to all. The JP brings access to 'actionable' data available for Maldives in open sources. This data is related to climate change, hazards, risks, socio-economic aspects and demography. That's how the JP can contribute to acceleration of SDG target 13.b
- In the stakeholder's consultation the potential of the updated climate projection data, high resolution geospatial data and other relevant data were discussed. This information enhanced the knowledge of the national institutions such as NDMA and MMS towards DRR. From the stakeholder's consultation it was also understood that the downscaling of climate projection data is absolutely necessary for a small country like Maldives where low-resolution data cannot do justice to the actual scenario. The downscaled data can generate granular information on hazard and risk which can help in develop effective climate change measures and integrate in the national policies, strategies and plans contributing to acceleration of SDG target 13.1
- With available and accessible resources and regulatory and administrative framework, improvement of decentralized governance for DRR and CCA with respect to identifying and implementing locally appropriate resilience building activities and projects that address specific vulnerabilities will lead to acceleration of SDGs.
- The JP interventions under output 2.1 supports the acceleration of SDGs 11, 13 and 16 as per the Theory of Change (ToC); through recommendations to create institutional architecture and financial mechanisms for risk transfer solutions to unlock resources for DRR/CCA in a sustainable manner in Maldives. Further, the insurance diagnostic study also identifies recommendations which can augment disaster risk financing initiatives to complement existing disaster planning and execution frameworks in Maldives.

Constraints that were encountered and any adjustments that were made to strengthen the relevance and effectiveness of the JP and the coherence and coordination of UN system support.

- Risk assessment based on geospatial technology requires relevant spatial data which is consistent and available for the entire country. Often there is no geo-coded data available for some of the variables (e.g., critical infrastructure). For these reasons new activity are needed to fulfil the data gap. During the research period it is also understood that most of the spatial datasets available for the Maldives are either inconsistent or there are gaps in the database. Same is true for the disaster records and loss and damage data. Hence, sometimes the method of analysis needs amendment to maximize the usage of available data.
- The Maldives being a small country the global level climate projection data does not justify the national scenario. Downscaled climate projection data is required to assess the risk scenario with less uncertainty. There is no consistent downscaled data readily available for the Maldives. However some are available on request/demand which might take long time to receive and proceed with further analysis.
- As part of the project the entire data sets along with guided manual on how to use and update the data will be handed over to the stakeholders. However, during the stakeholders consultation it was understood that there is concern over the availability of skilled persons to carry forward the data related work.
- Capacity building for impact-based forecasting for representatives of all the council is required, which needs review of the training modalities and the budget. During the consultation meeting it was realized that there is a requirement of large-scale capacity building for the stakeholders to, first, use the data and second, update the data by themselves. Hence, it might need adjustment in the budget and expenditure heads to fill in the capacity gaps at the user's end.
- Hiring local consultants with specific skills required for this project was challenging in the Maldives due to limited local expert capacities in certain areas. The national consultants could be hired after advertising the position two times. However, the all the required skills were not met.
- It was challenging to convene all project partners for technical group meetings for the JP due to their existing commitments. This resulted in delays in implementation of the majority of activities that were scheduled during 2022 (i.e., the first year of implementation). To address this issue, a Project Steering Committee meeting was convened in late 2022 when partners were intimated of the timeline and activities that need to be undertaken in the second and final year (2023) of implementation. Their

commitment was secured when partners agreed to integrate JP activities into their own work plans and to hold more frequent working group meetings to discuss strategies and challenges of implementation in 2023.

Next steps, scaling and sustainability [up to half a page]

- To scale up, amendments will be brought to the methodology to maximize the usage of the available data. The downscaled climate projection data needs to be acquired to ensure the risk profile presents the granular information at the subnational level and its suitability for the government' use for policy related decisions and action plans.
- Capacity building on impact-based forecasting and through monsoon forum and local council
- Provide all data to the stakeholders and enhance their capacity so that the future updating could be carried out independently. Different approaches of capacity building will be undertaken to fit the skill sets of the trainees. For example, training can be provided on the web based DSS to the less skilled persons and the decision makers, whereas skilled persons can be trained on intricate geospatial data analysis.
- DRR/CCA tagging of Maldives national budget: Under this JP, the Ministry of Finance in Maldives will receive technical assistance to develop a classification system for tagging national expenditure against climate change and disaster risk reduction measures. UNDP will provide external consultancy for this and parallelly conduct capacity building for line ministry staff who would be involved in tagging of national expenditures.
- The Economic Empowerment programme was conducted after developing an extensive trainer manual with clear outlines of session objectives, presentations, including time allocation and materials required for each session. The in-house trainers in UNDP, MED and LGA will continue the training programme in 2023 ensuring sustainability and continuity of the programme beyond the JP. In scaling up, the aim is to open participation for all women in communities in addition to the WDCs and councillors.

Programmatic Survey

Total number of people benefited from the JP in 2022: 65

Percentage (%) of women benefited among the total number:

Percentage (%) of children & youth (0-24 years of age) benefited among the total number:100

Percentage (%) of older persons (age 60 and above) benefited among the total number:

Percentage (%) of persons with disabilities benefited among the total number:

Explain how people benefited from the joint programme.

65 women representing island councils and WDCs (act 2.1.1) are direct beneficiaries; however, populations of the 26 islands that they represent will be future indirect beneficiaries owing to their trainings being replicated.

Priority Cross-cutting Issues

Cross-cutting results/issues

- Enhancing adaptive capacity to climate related hazards and natural disasters with a specific focus on gender and other marginalized groups keeping in mind their unique knowledge and skills in natural resources management and other social activities at household and community level.
- Ensuring appropriate resource allocation through establishment of transparent mechanism for resource allocation for DRR and CCA
- Creating an enabling environment for local councils to generate own revenue to finance local municipal services with a specific focus on DRR/CCA interventions which will benefit the most vulnerable cohorts of the island communities. This is because climate change impacts disproportionately affects marginalized population. Risk hotspot analysis indicates this trend in Maldives. DRR and CCA can reduce the risk of hazards and enhance resilience. For example, improved agricultural practices reduce disaster losses and increase revenue from crops. Revenue can be generated from the plantations created as part of CCA. CCA in coastal protection can increase the availability of aquatic species and increase revenues from fisheries
- Building capacity on strengthening climate governance and institutional development of local councils to create effective, accountable and inclusive institutions to support sustainable and risk informed development. Risk information is a major input for the formulation of CCA and DRR related policies and climate governance. Evidence on the risk or the potential risk is generated through specific skills and knowledge in data analysis using geospatial technology. Through stakeholder's consultation we focused

on building capacity of the national institutions such as NDMA and MMS on the “know-how” and “do-how” of risk assessment which will help them to sustainably and independently support the risk informed development.

- The insurance diagnostic report identifies interventions for low-income and vulnerable groups to use insurance mechanisms to strengthen financial resiliency against disasters, which affect vulnerable groups disproportionately.
- The Economic Empowerment programme conducted under activity 2.1.1 was directly focused on gender equality and women’s empowerment.

How did the JP apply the Gender Marker

The JP is Gender-sensitive (for example, the JP acknowledged and aimed to address gender to enhance the policy/programme, such as undertaking gender analysis to ensure policies/programmes do no harm). Capacity development (e.g. training of social workers, local governments, local communities);

JP address the below cross-cutting issues and principles of leaving no one behind

Human Rights	Persons with disabilities	Youth	Environmental and social standards
No	No	Yes	Yes

Key meetings and events organized in 2022

JP steering committee/ programme board meeting	Strategic partners/ donors event	Kick-off meeting
Yes, in 2022	Yes, in 2022	Yes, in 2022

Explanation if you have not held any key meeting/events.

Contribution to enhancing SDG Financing

Drafted a bill, strategy, and/or approved a law increasing the fiscal space for the policy focus	Produced financing, costing, diagnostic and feasibility analyses as a basis to invest or increase spending on the SDGs	Improved efficiency (cost savings) in the management of programmes/schemes	Improved effectiveness (value for money; i.e. social impact of \$1 spent) of spending	Drafted policies/regulatory frameworks or developed tools to incentivize private sector investment on the SDGs	Structured new financial instruments (public, private or blended) to leverage additional funding
No	Yes	No	No	No	No

How JP contributed to enhancing SDG financing

This intervention contributes to area 2 (in the table). The insurance diagnostic study provides recommendations on how insurance mechanisms can be potentially deployed in the Maldives to potentially cap or reduce public expenditure spent on disaster risk financing. If implemented by the Government of Maldives, this could potentially create fiscal space which can be redeployed for SDG accelerating activities such as the protection of environment and other conservation efforts, for which public expenditure is currently channelled only on a limited basis. To conduct the insurance diagnostic report, UNDP partnered with the Maldives Monetary Authority (MMA), the regulatory body for national insurance companies.

