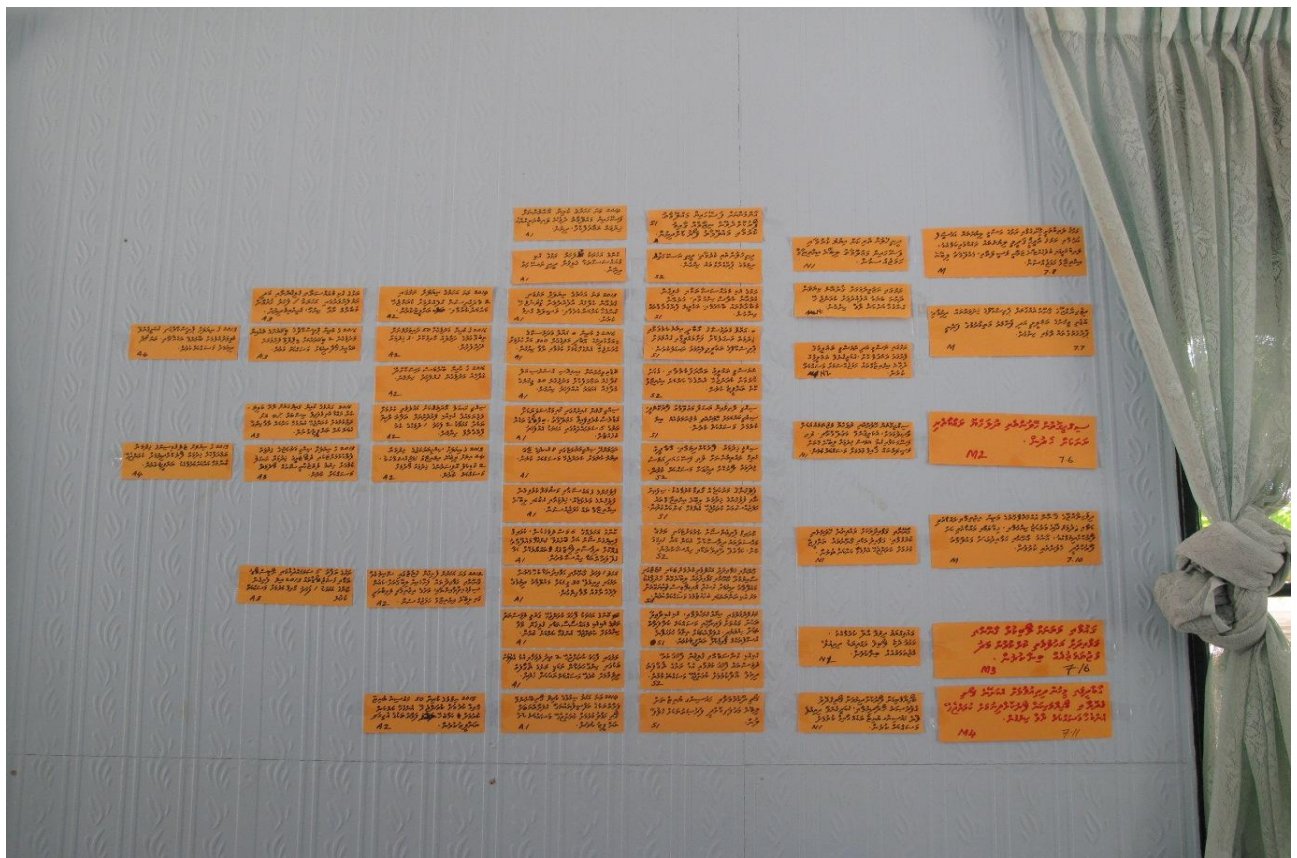


Atoll Ecosystem-based Conservation of Globally Significant Biological Diversity in the Maldives' Baa Atoll – GEF Project

(MDV/02/G31)



Terminal Evaluation Report

25th, December 2012

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Acknowledgements

The Consultant would like to express his appreciation and gratitude to all those who gave their time and provided invaluable information during the Terminal Evaluation of the AEC Project; their thoughts and opinions have informed the evaluation and contributed to its successful conclusion.

Special thanks go to those in the local communities, local and national government who provided their time to the Consultant with great Maldivian hospitality.

The Consultant is grateful for the arrangements put in place by the UNDP Country Office, Energy and Environment Programme. A special thank goes to Mihad Mohamed for its invaluable and effective support in all aspects related with logistics.

The Consultant is also grateful to the staff of the PMU and in particular to Shibau for his very professional support in making appointments with key ministries and informants possible and for his opinions which greatly informed this evaluation.

It should be noted that without Ismail from the PMU and all staff sitting in the Biosphere Reserve Office visits and interviews in Baa Atoll would not have been as smoother and effective as they have been.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5
I Project Summary Table	5
II Project Description.....	5
III Summary of Conclusions.....	6
IV Recommendations.....	11
V Lessons Learnt	12
1. INTRODUCTION	15
1.1 Purpose of the evaluation	15
1.2 Scope and methodology	15
1.2.1 Limitations and elements of attention	16
2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT.....	17
2.1 Description of the project	17
2.2 Socio-economic background and interlinkages with biodiversity in the Maldives.....	18
2.3 The AEC Project main stakeholders	19
2.4 Baa Atoll	21
3. FINDINGS.....	23
3.1 Project Design / Formulation	23
3.1.1 Project logic and strategy.....	23
3.1.2 The management of risk.....	24
3.1.3 Stakeholder involvement and Project Management Arrangements	25
3.2 Project Implementation	27
3.2.1 Implementation approach and adaptive management.....	27
3.2.2 Stakeholder participation.....	27
3.2.3 Financial planning and expenditures	28
3.2.4 Monitoring and Evaluation and Communication (*) Rating: MS	30
3.2.5 UNDP and Implementing Partner implementation (*) and coordination Rating: S	32
3.3 Project Results.....	32
3.3.1 Overall results (attainment of objectives) (*) Rating: HS.....	32
3.3.2 Relevance(*) and mainstreaming Rating: R	32
3.3.3 Effectiveness and Efficiency (*) Rating: HS	35
3.3.3.1 Areas for improvement	40
3.3.4 Country ownership	41
3.3.5 Sustainability (*) Rating: ML	41
3.3.7 Impact	43
4. CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS & LESSONS	46
4.1 Recommendations	46
4.2 Lessons learnt	49
Annex A – Terms of Reference.....	51
Annex B – Document consulted/available for consultation	52
Annex C – Evaluation Questions	54
Annex D - Schedule, Itinerary and Institutions/People met: 17 Nov.– 02 Dec. 2012	63
Annex E – AEC Project Logical Framework	66

Annex F – Rating Table	73
Annex G – Rating Table	74
Annex H – Photographic report	Error! Bookmark not defined.

Tables

Table N.1 Evaluation Rating Table

Table N .2 Co-financing

Table N.3 Budget allocations

Table N.4 Total expenditures until September 2012

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The present Report constitutes the Terminal Evaluation (TE) of the Atoll Ecosystem Conservation Project (AEC), an initiative to support nature and biodiversity conservation and sustainable development in the Republic of Maldives. The TE took place in November-December 2012 with 15 days field mission, both in Malé and Baa Atoll. The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the achievement of project results, and to draw lessons that can improve their sustainability as well as aid in the overall enhancement of UNDP/GEF programming. It also identifies lessons for other conservation projects in the Maldives and elsewhere.

The evaluation approach utilises the five standards evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact) with greater emphasis on relevance, effectiveness and sustainability as dictated by the evaluation stage (terminal evaluation). The detailed approach is described below in chapter 1.2 and in the Inception Report prepared before the evaluation mission.

I Project Summary Table

Project Title	Atoll Ecosystem-based Conservation of Globally significant biological diversity in the Maldives' Baa Atoll			
GEF Project ID:			<i>at endorsement (Million US\$)</i>	<i>at completion (Million US\$)</i>
UNDP Project ID:	00035996	GEF financing:	2,730,100.00	2,730,100.00
Country:	Maldives	IA/EA own:	IA : 1,295,000.00	IA : 271,765
Region:	Asia Pacific	Government:	3,010,000.00	845,700
Focal Area:	Biodiversity	Other:	Private Sector : 74,370.00 Japan-ADB/MFAMR: 87,000.00 FAO/MFAMR: 142,000.00 PDF Co-financing: 45,000.00 <i>Anticipated leveraging:</i> 1,314,580.00	Private Sector : 66,192 (+80,000 likely) N/A N/A PDF Co-financing: 45,000.00
FA Objectives, (OP/SP):	OP2: Coastal, Marine, and Freshwater Ecosystems	Total co-financing:	5,967,950	1,308,657
Executing Agency:	Ministry of Environment & Energy	Total Project Cost:	8,698,050.00	4,038,757
Other Partners involved:		ProDoc Signature (date project began):		01 November 2003
		(Operational) Closing Date:	Proposed: 01/11/ 2008	Actual: 31/12/ 2012

II Project Description and Design

The purpose of the Project was to introduce a pilot system for collaborative management of integrated conservation and sustainable development on Baa Atoll to serve as a model for other atolls in the Maldives and eventually in other countries. The *ecosystem approach* for biodiversity conservation and sustainable development was proposed through a participatory design, based on the recognition of: i) the undeniable linkages between natural coastal resources and biodiversity with the country's economic prosperity and social development, and ii) the fact that conventional approaches to conservation had not proved effective. An integrated perspective on conservation and resource management was taken where biological diversity was not accounted for simply as the number of species but for the complex interaction between the physical environment and the biological communities.

The Project was designed in 2001-2002 under a Project Development Facility (PDF) grant from the GEF and was in line with GEF OP#2 as well as consistent with UNDP Country Programme's objectives; it was

expected to generate substantial global benefit as well as sustainable development for the local communities. UNDP is the GEF implementing agency while the Project is Government executed. The project plan and budget, including US\$2.73 million of GEF funding and US\$4.65 million of co-financing, were approved in 2004 for an initial duration of 5 years, until 2009.

The AEC Project was implemented from November 2003 to December 2012 during which significant political and social turmoil occurred, including the opening of the country to a new process of decentralisation and democratisation. As the process substantially modified the institutional framework, an extensive update of the context and of the AEC Project stakeholders is provided in chapters 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4 below, this being also functional to the description of the findings of Outcome N.1 – Mainstreaming. The Ministry of Environment hosted the Project and through the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) took the lead to implement the ecosystem approach in Baa Atoll.

Mainly due to the disruption caused by the 2004 tsunami and a series of government changes and political elections, the Project really started to be on track only after the recruitment of the Adaptive Management Advisor (AMA) and of a new Project Manager (PM) (late 2007) and the implementation of the Mid-Term Review (MTE) (August 2008). The current revision of planning was done in that period as the original Logframe and Results-based Framework proved very difficult to understand and apply for the project team and for the Government; the Inception Phase failed to revise the Logframe into a practical planning tool; conversely following the MTE recommendations, envisaged outputs were reduced from 16 to 8 in 2008 while confirming the three-pronged strategy: i) the mainstreaming of the ecosystem approach to conserving biodiversity across sectoral institutions and in policies both nationally and in Baa Atoll; ii) the application of model, innovative practices to conserve biodiversity on Baa Atoll and iii) the relief of pressures on biodiversity by supporting sustainable alternative livelihood strategies in atoll and islands planning. The analysis of the current Logframe is provided in chapter 3.1.1; overall the new formulation provides a much more operational tool for planning and management but with weaknesses which are not simple design formalities but instead have important repercussions on management and monitoring. In particular these are: i) the absence of the purpose indicators, the major tools to assess effects and impact; ii) failure to further develop indicators and distinguish outcome and output indicators in a way to allow easy annual monitoring of activities and measurement of achievement in different moments of project implementation; iii) given the general recognized lack of capacity in the country, insufficient attention on national and local capacity development and training which instead should have been reflected in the indicators, allowing management to keep focus on key technical and managerial aspects; iv) the need to properly define risks and assumptions to allow management of risk.

III Summary of Conclusions

Table N.1 Evaluation Rating Table

Evaluation Ratings:		
1. Monitoring and Evaluation	rating	Comments
M&E design at entry	S	The original M&E design was well detailed but overly complex with too many outputs and indicators. Project management felt the need to revise the overall planning. The new Logframe is a much more operational tool which gathered stakeholders towards a common vision and objectives; however there are shortcomings, especially in the indicators, i.e.: i) purpose indicators are completely lacking; ii) capacity building indicators are no longer present; iii) outcome and output indicators should have been differentiated; iv) risks and assumptions do not always identify elements outside management control in order to allow the management of risk (see chapter 3.1.2).
M&E Plan Implementation	MS	M&E has been conducted at activity level in a satisfactory way since 2009 but only in AMA's reports. An oral way of communication appears a prevalent habit which is probably the reason for the usual weakness in reporting. Reporting on indicators is not systematic and key impact indicators are not measured. Stakeholders participation is excellent; yet Project Steering Committee (PSC)

		meeting could have been organised in a more structured way, calling them and providing basic material in advance; PSC minutes of meetings are not outstanding. Project response to the MTE recommendations has been very good and provided the occasion to put activities on the right track.
Overall quality of M&E	MS	Reporting appears more a formality than a real monitoring exercise. Shortcomings in the definition and measurement of indicators and weaknesses of reporting lead judgement towards a moderately satisfactory rating. Although this did not impede Project from obtaining significant achievements, there are quite some unintended results which are not given appropriate value because of the weaknesses in reporting and in measuring indicators at the purpose level. Communication has been affected; while some good promotional tools have been developed, careful monitoring and reporting would have provided the occasion to develop communication targeting different stakeholders by adapted means to ensure engagement and maintain interest. Global benefit assessment would have benefitted by preserving the original intention to use information baseline on biodiversity conditions and ecosystem health and measure it over time. In addition, considering the impact the Project has on stakeholders, awareness level surveys should have been conducted with key actors.
2 IA& EA Execution	rating	Comments
Quality of UNDP Implementation	S	UNDP played a supportive and facilitating role to the Project in addition to supervising progress and the management of funds. UNDP co-financing did not materialise as expected. Given the difficult political and operational circumstances in the field, UNDP and GEF support for two project extensions proved the correct decision to ensure achievement of results.
Quality of Execution - Executing Agency	S	Project execution lagged behind until 2008; with the hiring of a new PM and of AMA by the end of 2008 and a new team in place, sound adaptive management led the Project towards its current success in achieving major results. Considering the disruption of the 2004 tsunami and the volatile political environment the Project faced, overall implementation is very successful in mobilising stakeholders towards a common vision for atoll-ecosystem based conservation and in modifying the common way biological resources were perceived towards more sustainable uses and the recognition of their economic value. Greater attention to indicators, especially impact and capacity building indicators would have provided additional value and results. Financial management was accurate and allowed the project to continue for a much longer period than originally envisaged without a budget increase. Conversely, co-financing did not materialise as expected as apparently no party managed it.
Overall quality of Implementation / Execution	S	Overall implementation is rated as satisfactory with very good adaptive management features, especially considering the difficult operational and political environment but with shortcoming in the management of co-financing. More could have been reached with greater attention to the measurement of indicators at purpose level and to obtaining the promised co-financing.
3. Assessment of Outcomes	rating	Comments
Relevance	R	A highly relevant initiative through all its project cycle. The Project was perfectly in line with GEF and UNDP Country Programme's objectives at project start as it is today. Relevance to national priorities is undeniable.
Effectiveness	HS	A mechanism for environmental conservation has been tested in the field; outstanding results are reached in Outcome 1 and Outcome 2, with significant unintended results among which the most important is that Project activities in developing Island and Atoll development plans constitute the first implementation step of the decentralisation process. The HS rating is meant to recognise this situation notwithstanding shortcomings in a few outputs of Outcomes 1 and Outcome 3.
Efficiency	S	The Project cannot be evaluated as fully efficient given delays occurred and the lack of management of the co-financing budget. On the other hand financial management has been accurate; the GEF budget has been almost completely spent; private co-financing is being mobilised while only a part of the public and other partners co-financing materialised. Cost-effectiveness is however high given the Project was able to reach most of its results being operated for a much larger period without any increase in budget.
Overall Project Outcome Rating	S	Various unintended results were achieved and the Project is regarded as the most successful one in the environmental area, and as extremely successful

		compared to other GEF projects; its approach to face political turmoil and changes derived from the country's passage to democratisation and decentralisation was very effective and produced outstanding results including the fact that Islands and Atolls development plans started to be elaborated in other atolls. The S rating is a recognition of this situation notwithstanding shortcomings in the management of the co-financing budget and in a few outputs of Outcome 1 and of Outcome 3.
4. Sustainability	rating	Comments
Financial resources:	L	Within the present conditions, financial sustainability is likely: the Baa Atoll Conservation Fund (BACF) is capitalised with initial US\$ 340,000, Government is committed to provide financial resources over the next 5 years, the tourism sector committed through signing partnership agreements and money is expected to be generated from the management of the Biosphere Reserve (BR) (selling of access permits to Protected Areas and of promotional material).
Socio-political:	ML	Next year is a new election year and political changes are possible. It is difficult to say which support the BR would receive from a new Government; if the BR is well managed and generate benefits, sustainability shall be expected. From the social point of view, there is the need to keep awareness raising (this is not a one-time activity), conduct capacity building and implement activities to ensure the sacrifices for conservation asked to the population are balanced with alternative livelihoods. Full support is at present provided by the tourism sector, the driving economic force in Baa Atoll.
Institutional framework and governance:	ML	Eventual turnovers which may follow a Government change are likely to affect governance. Within the current framework, the Ministry of Environment and EPA appear firmly committed to sustain the BR and provide the required capacity building support. The enrolment of the BR staff under the civil service is a clear commitment. Roles and responsibilities have been defined for the management of the BR but still not endorsed and in any case not all local stakeholders are clear on them.
Environmental :	L	If the present conditions are respected, management plans for PAs are completed, rules and regulations are enforced and alternative livelihood activities are found for fishermen families, environmental risks should be minimum. The evident commitment of the tourism sector (resorts, diving centres, safari boats) is promising, giving its clear interest in maintaining the ecosystem in good health. Waste management is the key environmental problem; if the WB project is implemented as envisaged, hopefully sustainable management solutions will be found.
Overall likelihood of sustainability:	ML	Most sustainability elements are in place; still there is the need to handle some possible causes of instability including the clear definition of roles and responsibilities for managing the BR, strengthen capacities at different levels and secure capable and committed staff for the BR Office, ensure awareness is a continuous activity which targets fishermen and their families. In addition it is obvious that there cannot be a BR if waste management is not secured.

Rating for Outcomes, Effectiveness, Efficiency, M&E; I&E Execution: HS: Highly Satisfactory; S: Satisfactory; MS: Moderately Satisfactory; MU: Moderately Unsatisfactory; U: Unsatisfactory; HU: Highly Unsatisfactory.

Rating for Sustainability: L: Likely; ML: Moderately likely; MU: Moderately Unlikely; U: Unlikely

Adaptive Management. The AEC Project was implemented during a difficult and unstable political and operating environment, bridging the phases of before and after decentralisation and democratisation. Notwithstanding delays in implementation, it is regarded as the most successful environmental project the country ever had; compared with other GEF on-going projects this is more than evident. Sound and effective application of adaptive management was able to counterbalance implementation inefficiencies characterised by delays occurring at all levels, most of which outside the management control (tsunami, political changes). Limiting field activities during pre-electoral times provided for additional holds-up but was a very appropriate decision to keep the Project apart from the political campaigns; it resulted in support being secured from both the old and the current Atoll and Island administrations. The professional skills of AMA and of the PM provided mentoring assistance and were instrumental in building relationships at national and Baa Atoll levels in both the public and private arena. The respect the PMU gained from

national and local stakeholders emerges from the interviews. EPA became the key institution supporting activities in the field.

Financial Management A careful budget administration and a considerable flexibility of management including the availability of UNDP and GEF to provide two extensions allowed the AEC Project to be implemented without any increase in budget for quite more years than originally envisaged. As mentioned in Table 1 above, if the envisaged co-financing budget was appropriately monitored, more could have been reached in terms of livelihood activities and more funds would be available to capitalise the Baa Atoll Conservation Fund recently established.

Stakeholders expressed the wish that Project is continued for an additional 6 months/one year. Considering the Project started to have proper guidance after AMA and a new PM were hired (end of 2007) and following the instrumental role played by the MTE (August 2008), the Consultant believes the need to consolidate achievements, complete the transfer of responsibilities, organise and train the BR Office and elaborate the management plan for the reserve is undeniable. However, although some type of external support and supervision should effectively be ensured, it is time for the country to take over.

Results. The AEC Project is regarded as **the first large soft environmental project the country had** and the most successful one in the environmental area, having achieved concrete results and **international recognition**, with the declaration of the **UNESCO Baa Atoll Biosphere Reserve** in June 2011. Largely drawing from scientific knowledge, community consultations and a strong relation with Baa Atoll's private sector, a mechanism for environmental conservation has been tested at atoll and island level; it represents the initial step of the decentralisation process which started with the first country multi-party election in 2008 and it is regarded as a model for sustained progress and for replication to other atolls. Interviews conducted for this TE confirm that stakeholders largely recognise the dependence of the Maldivian economy from biological resources and natural ecosystems and therefore the need to integrate them into economic policies, strategies and budgets to ensure sustained and equitable economic growth. The importance of the achievements of the AEC Project towards this objective is prevalent in the opinion of relevant actors both at national and Baa Atoll level. Respondents point to the fact that the process is now firmly established in Government thinking and in policy and for the first time, has the potential to effectively empower communities' decision making.

The key development aspect which shows both the relevance of the project and one of its main outcomes is that the entirety of Baa Atoll was declared a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in June 2011, following an extensive process of stakeholders and communities consultations. **Ownership of the Project is high in all line-ministries** considering that significant efforts are being made to manage the environment and conserve the country's exceptional marine and coastal biodiversity and mainstream it in policies and programmes. The AEC Project's advocacy and sound implementation modalities resulted in the revision of a large number of policies and plans to integrate biodiversity principles and/or the ecosystem approach. Chapter 3.3.2 provides a detailed description serving the purpose of identifying both relevance as well as **achievements in terms of mainstreaming**. At local level, support provided to both the previous and the current administration resulted in the elaboration of a **zonation system for Baa Atoll, a Baa Atoll Sustainable Development Plan, land use plans and Islands Development Plans**. The **Valuing Biodiversity Report** (April 2009) provides decision-makers with an invaluable instrument to justify the wisdom of investing in biodiversity conservation due to its undeniable contribution to the Maldives and in particular Baa Atoll's economy. Direct, indirect and existence values demonstrate how coastal ecosystems provide products and services fundamental to people's well-being ensuring food security, livelihoods and health.

An effective public-private partnership lies at the heart of the AEC Project implementation: national and local authorities are partnering with the tourist sector which is the economic driving force in Baa Atoll (it employs 61% of the working population: 40% of households have members employed primarily in resorts

but also in safari boat operations, dive centers and tourism related activities such as reef fishing). Although it is early to appreciate the contribution to the global objective of conserving globally significant biodiversity in the Maldives, **preliminary impacts are already visible**. In the Consultant's opinion, the declaration of Baa Atoll as a Biosphere Reserve is certainly the most visible result but not necessarily the most important. The **conservation management model built on baseline ecological assessments, economic valuation of natural resources and an effective public-private partnership is the key achievement supporting decentralisation**; notably, the **elaboration of island development plans has started in other atolls**. **8 Protected Areas were declared in Baa Atoll** and the boundaries of the 2 existing ones were extended. **The first management plan of the country has been gazetted** and is under implementation; it concerns Hanifaru Protected Area, a world famous biodiversity hotspot for manta rays and sharks. The enforcement of regulations is producing the desired effects: i) **conflicts among resource users** (snorkelling tourists and divers brought by safari boats and resorts diving centres) **almost disappeared** in the area; conversely disagreements with fishermen could increase as more protected areas come under implementation and limit fishing activities); ii) **the number of visible animals (mainly manta rays and occasionally sharks) is reported to have increased since last year**. This is based on the appreciation of resorts and diving centres biologists and not on scientific data as the AEC Project did not yet implement the envisaged measurements of ecosystem health and biodiversity indicators.

The basic elements of sustainability are in place. Government's commitment can be appreciated by the inclusion of biodiversity conservation principles in key national and local policies (see chapter 3.3.2 under Relevance and mainstreaming for a detailed list) as well as by the Government declared intention to enrol the staff of the recently opened BR Office under the civil service starting from January 2013; an organigram has been endorsed and gradually all figures identified should be part of the system although for the moment at least the current BR staff will be enrolled (4 people, plus additional rangers). The constructive private-public partnership established between the national and local authorities and the tourism sector (resorts, diving centres and safari boats which signed partnerships agreements) for the management of the BR has all the characteristics to be sustainable if careful monitoring and follow up is provided; competition exists in the tourism industry and good practices in a resort/diving centre are quickly adopted in others. The BR can be instrumental in further developing the tourism industry in an environmentally sustainable way; on the other hand, the **Baa Atoll Conservation Fund, a financial mechanism to sustain livelihoods and directly benefit local communities**, is regarded as a major achievement, the first of this kind in the country's history. The AEC Project received the highest level political support: in Rio+20, the President of the Maldives launched the idea to extend the concept of the Biosphere Reserve to all the country in five years time; the idea appears overly ambitious but attractive to maintain a focused interest on conservation; careful analysis and a phased approach is required to assess the peculiar economic characteristics of each atoll and the possibility to find sustained financial mechanisms.

Yet this is not the arrival point and much remains to be done to ensure sustainable management and hopefully replication. The analysis of documents and interviews conducted for this TE confirm that comprehensive sectoral policies have largely integrated biodiversity principles and the ecosystem approach but overlapping mandates still impede completely coordinated activities among line-ministries; effective implementation and management of policies still require strengthening of rules and regulations enforcement. The Valuing Biodiversity study states that few positive economic incentives for sustainable biodiversity management exist in the country; instead, if properly designed, these should be identified to raise revenues, internalise biodiversity costs and benefits into private economic decisions and act as redistributive mechanisms. The country still lacks a waste management plan; there cannot be a Biosphere Reserve without proper disposal of waste which is the single most urgent environmental problem.

Most stakeholders interviewed pointed to the need for awareness to be a continuous activity; the Consultant believes that different communication tools should be developed, adapted to the specific audience. Roles and responsibilities for the management of the BR have been established but are not yet

endorsed and communicated at field level; therefore local stakeholders are not yet clear about which institution is taking the leading role. There is an urgent need to implement livelihood activities which together with conservation initiatives are to be identified within the Baa Atoll Conservation Programme and financed through the recently established BACF.

Evidently, a project focused on behavioural changes, awareness raising and influencing policy making requires long periods of time to become established in government thinking and in communities practices. Based on achievements and lessons learnt, recommendations are provided below, tailored to ensure the sustainability of the achievements and the implementation of the recently declared Biosphere Reserve. The text in blue colour identified recommendations which are implementable before the end of the Project. Chapter 4.1 below provides additional details including which is the urgency and which are the responsible entities to take action.

IV Recommendations

R1. Invest in capacity development at BR Office, other atolls and central levels. Capacities needs to be strengthened at all levels but especially urgently for the BR staff by ensuring i) they have the operational means in place, ii) under the Ministry of Environment and EPA leadership, full advantage is taken of the organizational and environmental management experience the tourist operators can offer and iii) EPA support; it is recommended that an EPA staff is seconded to the BRO for a sufficient period of time.

To sustain the decentralisation process, capacity development should be provided to the staff of the administration in other atolls to ensure the elaboration of Island and Atoll development plans. Capacities need to be strengthened also at central level, in sectoral ministries to ensure adaptive management and full application/replication of the decentralised environmental model. It is recommended that the Government: i) develops clear guidelines and codes of practice for integrating biodiversity into sectoral policies and programmes are developed; ii) proceed to the revision of the Environmental and Fisheries Laws; iii) identifies additional positive economic incentives to support conservation and ecosystem /biodiversity management; iv) strengthen enforcement mechanisms.

R2. Sustain the private-public relationship and implement livelihood activities. The AEC Project has been extremely successful in building partnerships and raising enthusiasm; the private sector embraced the Project's objectives and communities generally adhere to the BR concept; however this may quickly be reversed if the management of the Reserve does not prove effective; trust has to be built and maintained with communities which have long expected livelihood benefits and the private sector, a key contributor to the maintenance of the BR. It is recommended that momentum is not lost through a smooth and quick implementation of BACF activities.

R3. Invest in awareness and in communicating the interlinkages between conservation and development objectives. Awareness raising about the importance of observing the rules and regulations established or to be established in the BR and protected areas' management plans must be a continuous activity which utilizes different means targeted to different audiences. It should include: i) teaching material and curricula revision, ii) strips and comics for kids in schools but also for adults at community level; iii) frequent meetings between the Atoll Council/Island Councils with the BR staff to revert the current gap in communication; iv) a simple version of the Valuing Biodiversity Study for dissemination to local administration staff, local communities, schools; v) NGOs and Women Development Committees should be given the opportunity to play a role in raising and maintaining awareness as they can be instrumental for the sustainability of the BR.

R4. Quality Monitoring and Financial Monitoring for the management of BACF. Monitoring mechanisms should be ensured and structured to: i) financially monitor BACF; ii) monitor the quality of implementation

of the future livelihood projects under BACF; a final report on achievements will not suffice; monitoring should be continuous and a mechanism for beneficiaries to control on each other should be found; it may prove particularly beneficial to control fishermen's activities.

UNDP attention is drawn on the management of unspent Truc Funds (left balances from the Women Development Project, the Goidhoo Agricultural Project and the previously envisaged ferry terminal in Eydhafushi): it should be ensured these funds are spent for the envisaged purposes or be given a different destination (i.e. be integrated in the BACF) to allow UNDP to close its accounts.

R5. Complete the management plans for the other PA of the BR. Many users currently identify the BR with Hanifaru PA; however draft management plans have been prepared for another 5 protected areas of the Reserve; they should be completed as soon as possible and put under implementation. The level of conflict is likely to increase as more areas will be prohibited for certain fishing or recreational activities modalities. Conflict resolution mechanisms should be envisaged.

R6. Climate change adaptive measures at atoll and islands level. Climate change challenges the country's own existence. It is recommended to include climate change adaptive measures at atoll and islands level in the BR management plan.

R7. Extension of the BR concept to all the country. Should this idea progress, a phased approach is recommended ensuring: i) sustainable tangible results are reached in Baa Atoll, ii) careful analysis is done of each atoll economic characteristics to identify possible sustainable elements, iii) proper consideration is given to the difficult and time-consuming process of constructing partnerships while at the same time producing scientific knowledge; iv) the awareness ground is prepared from the grassroots level by revising educational material and curricula, train teachers and work with the media; v) ensure that an eventual upscale do not jeopardize the visibility and prestige of the Baa Atoll BR; vi) ensure waste management is addressed. If effective management is sought and not just a designation label, a network of protected areas covering the different atolls could be a more practical possibility.

R8. Organise a lessons learnt participatory exercise with national and local stakeholders, including representatives of the Baa communities to identify the lessons learnt from the process of applying the decentralised environmental management model to conserve biodiversity and build future management on strengths and opportunities. Knowledge sharing mechanisms should be identified.

R9. Consider additional donor support. Government commitment and sustainability elements are in place: BR staff shall be enrolled soon under the civil service, the BACF is established and capitalised; EPA support secured. However the BR is as fragile as the corals it intends to protect; complete donor support withdrawal at this stage may jeopardize achievements and it is recommended that a supportive and supervisory role is maintained.

R.10 Undertake an ex-post evaluation in a couple of years time to assess impact and future benefits generated by the implementation of the BACP/ BR management plan and the functioning of BACF. The ex-post evaluation should be prepared in advance through: i) the implementation of the envisaged monitoring surveys of atoll biodiversity and ecosystem health conditions (not done before the end of the Project); ii) the update of databases or the GIS if functioning; iii) the selection of a control group in another atoll.

V Lessons Learnt

L.1 An effective Inception Phase. A solid inception phase is of paramount importance to i) update planning and monitoring tools (Logframe and indicators) adapting them to new field conditions, ii) construct a solid baseline, iii) ensure implementation arrangements reflect feasible and inclusive mechanisms. This has been

particularly challenging in the Maldives which have experienced a lot of political turmoil and fundamental changes in the administration. There has been the need for an Inception Phase in different moments considering that it has been possible to put the Project on track only after the MTE was conducted in 2008.

L.2 Adaptive Management and dedicated staff. The AEC Project would not have succeeded without the effective adaptive management measures put in place by i) AMA, ii) the PM, iii) UNDP/GEF. The decision to stop activities in pre-election times has been the cause of additional delays but has proved particularly sound as avoided the Project to become politicised. UNDP/GEF flexibility to provide for two project extensions demonstrated to be the right decisions. Project achievements are an indication of the professional and dedicated guidance and partnership building efforts of both AMA and the PM which is confirmed through the conversations the Consultant held with involved partners. Wherever possible linking short-term consultants, especially international experts, to a project long-term objectives would also prove useful instead of simple one-time inputs.

L.3 Sound monitoring, reporting and communication mechanisms. The AEC Project has reached important results. But more could have been achieved especially in terms of awareness if the M&E system and the communication flow were more structured and constant. Monitoring needs to be more than a formality required by the client; it needs to be supportive of daily management and provide direction; it should produce data and information to be used to communicate with different stakeholders utilising different and appropriate means. Monitoring should also include “deep thinking moments” of reflection to identify lessons learnt and build on them. Last but not least, a careful monitoring of the co-financing would have offered larger opportunities to implement livelihood activities.

L.4 Linking policy and field work through effective public-private partnerships. The ability to show stakeholders the economic value of the biodiversity resources and that win-win solutions are possible for both conservation and livelihood purposes is the way forward to have actors on board from the policy to the field level. The effectiveness of the mechanism will have to be evaluated in the future but there is widespread recognition that drawing from both scientific and local knowledge has created trust and partnership and enabled the establishment of a model for conservation which is replicable and sustainable. The role of the private sector is prevailing. In addition the AEC Project would not have succeed without the high level political backing received. The linkage of the policy to the field work through effective public-private partnership is to be considered “good practice”.

L.5 Sound built-in exit strategies. Exit strategies should be built in projects as soon as possible during implementation; if properly done, they provide guidance. This is also valid for the smaller initiatives within a larger project. The activities implemented under Outcome 3 would have largely benefitted from the inclusion of exit strategies which could have anticipated some of the problems experienced.

Acronyms

AEC	Atoll Ecosystem Conservation Project
AMA	Adaptive Management Advisor
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
BACF	Baa Atoll Conservation Fund
BACP	Baa Atoll Conservation Programme
BASDP	Baa Atoll Sustainable Development Plan
BR	Biosphere Reserve
BRO	Biosphere Reserve Office
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CO	Country Office
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
EoP	End of Project
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GIS	Geographic Information System
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ICCR	Integrated Climate Change Resilient Island Planning Project
IDP	Island Development Plan
LAM	Liveaboard Association
LDSP	Livelihood Development Support Programme
MAB	Man and the Biosphere
MATI	Maldives Association for Tourism Industry
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MEE	Ministry of Environment Energy
MoFA	Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture
MFT	Ministry of Finance and Treasury
MG	Managing Director
MGF	Ministry of Gender and Family
MRC	Marine Research Centre
MTAC	Ministry of Tourism Arts and Culture
MTE	Mid-Term Evaluation
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NDP	National Development Plan
NPD	National Project Director
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PA	Protected Area
PDF	Project Development Facility
PIR	Project Implementation Review
PM	Project Manager
PMU	Project Management Unit
PSC	Project Steering Committee
SLM	Sustainable Land Management
TE	Terminal Evaluation
ToR	Terms of Reference
TPR	Tri-Partite Review
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
WB	World Bank
WDC	Women Development Committee
WTP	Willingness to Pay

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the evaluation

The Atoll Ecosystem-Based Conservation of Globally Significant Biological Diversity in the Maldives's Baa Atoll, or Atoll Ecosystem Conservation (AEC) Project is an initiative to support nature and biodiversity conservation and sustainable development in the Republic of Maldives. The project is subject to a Terminal Evaluation (TE) under UNDP and GEF Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) policies and procedures.

The present report constitutes the TE of the AEC Project and has been elaborated by the independent consultant Elena Laura Ferretti in November-December 2012. The TE has been conducted according to the guidance, rules and procedures established by UNDP and GEF as reflected in the UNDP Evaluation Guidance for GEF Financed Projects¹ and the ToR ([Annex A](#)). It entailed a few days home-based preparation period, two weeks in Malé and on Baa Atoll and a final reporting period; the final report has been submitted at the end of December 2012.

The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the achievement of project results, and to draw lessons that can improve their sustainability as well as aid in the overall enhancement of UNDP/GEF programming. Where possible, it also identifies lessons for other conservation projects in the Maldives and elsewhere.

As required by UNDP/GEF and generally used in international evaluations, the criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact apply; evaluation questions were drafted during the inception phase, according to these criteria and based on the questions already suggested in the TOR.

1.2 Scope and methodology

The TE aimed at collecting and analyzing data in as much as possible systematic manner to ensure that all the findings, conclusions and recommendations are substantiated by evidence.

The rationale of the Consultant's approach included: i) mainly a qualitative evaluation based on the collection of primarily secondary data, documents and information analysis, Logframe and M&E system analysis supplemented by interviews to relevant stakeholders and the participant observation; ii) an analysis based on the five standard evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact) but with greater emphasis on relevance, effectiveness and sustainability: impact can only be partially appreciated as the project is just approaching its end and effects may take time to become manifest; on the other hand the criteria of efficiency is less relevant at this stage of project development; iii) evaluation findings assessed at both national and local levels; iv) search for key informants; v) within the respect of the ToRs, greater emphasis given to time to be spent in the field; vi) a well prepared desk phase, considered key to the success of the mission; vii) respect of the Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System. The approach developed in four phases:

- a) Preparation Phase: a home-based desk review of basic documentation and literature ([Annex B](#)) provided by the Project and obtained through a web research; first identification of gaps of information; preparation of the evaluation design (evaluation questions, proposed methods, sources of information and data collection procedures ([Annex C](#)); elaboration of the Inception Report, submitted to UNDP Maldives Country Office (CO) on November 13t, 2012. It included the tentative schedule of the field

¹ As per GEF requirements, a terminal evaluation shall be conducted within six months before or after project completion.

mission with identification of relevant stakeholders to be interviewed (authorities, experts, partners, beneficiaries, stakeholders in the capital city and in Baa Atoll) ([Annex D](#): final mission schedule and people/institutions interviewed). During the preparation phase a first analysis of the Logframe, as per the revision made in 2008, was conducted ([Annex E](#) last updated Logframe);

- b) Field Phase: both in Malé and in Baa Atoll to undertake interviews with relevant stakeholders, visit a number of islands and reef sites, analyse findings, and discuss the preliminary conclusions and lessons learnt with the project management, steering committee members and UNDP environment staff. The process has been participatory to ensure the contribution of stakeholders and beneficiaries to the analysis of the context, of the data and information collected and generally of the outcomes achieved. At the end of the field phase, a draft set of initial findings in the form of a Power Point presentation has been discussed during a wrap up meeting with UNDP, the project team and representatives from the Ministry of Environment & Energy (MEE) and from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to review initial findings and request any additional information;
- c) Draft reporting phase: a draft report has been submitted on December the 10th, 2012 according to the guidelines provided in the TORs organised around the five evaluation criteria of Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Sustainability and partially impact as much as it can be appreciated at this stage of project development;
- d) Final reporting phase: following comments received (on December the 20th, 2012), the final report has been prepared, including the provision of ratings to assess project relevance, effectiveness and efficiency as well as the quality of the M&E system as per GEF requirements ([Annex G, Rating Table](#)).

1.2.1 Limitations and elements of attention

Some critical elements have to be considered in reading this report for the way in which they may have affected the evaluation process and findings:

- the PMU did not fully utilise the Logframe as a monitoring tool; a number of indicators are lacking; risks and assumptions are not all factor external to management control, as required; the baseline is often broadly defined and not all indicators have been measured;
- financial data have been particularly difficult to obtain, especially those related to co-financing;
- the Consultant had limited access to information regarding activities financed through the UNDP Truc funds either because in Divehi or because the field mission did not include visits to islands where these projects were implemented;
- the presence of a “control group” in another atoll would have been an interesting element to assess impacts and effects (preliminary impacts);
- in some cases, the analysis of impact may encounter difficulties of “attribution” considering exogenous factors which are not attributable to the Project.

The Project did not yet produce a final report; overall project reporting utilises tables partially based on the Logframe and does not provide detailed narrative information. Considering that almost ten years have elapsed since the initial project identification, this terminal evaluation report attempts to partially fill the gap by updating the project context; in many cases, this is functional to the description of Outcome 1, mainstreaming.

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

2.1 Description of the project

In the Maldives, atoll ecosystems 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, mainly fish and tourism. Social and economic change alters consumptive behaviour and livelihood strategies, outpacing institutional capacity and sectoral programs to adequately manage it. This in turn threatens 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 were taken at the level of individual sectors, such as infrastructure, fisheries, and tourism, without much coordination and integration.

The purpose of the Project is to introduce a pilot system for collaborative management of integrated conservation and sustainable development on Baa Atoll, which would serve as a model for other atoll communities in the Maldives and for other countries. Following the last revision of planning, a three-pronged strategy was taken involving: 1) the mainstreaming of biodiversity conservation objectives across sectoral institutions and policies at both national and Baa Atoll levels; 2) the conservation of biodiversity "in the water" and "on the ground" by establishing Protected Areas (PAs) and managing them through innovative national-local and public-private partnerships in Baa Atoll; and 3) the relief of livelihood-related pressure on biodiversity by supporting the inclusion of alternative sustainable livelihood development strategies in atoll and island planning and starting their implementation.

By the end of the project, modified sectoral policies and programs were to enable institutions to more effectively manage biodiversity. Government, local communities, and the private sector were to partner to secure the long-term conservation of protected areas in Baa Atoll. Local people were to apply new knowledge and accessing new sources of financing in pursuit of alternative livelihoods.

The Project was designed in 2001-2002 under a Project Development Facility (PDF) grant from the GEF and was in line with GEF OP#2 as well as consistent with UNDP Country Programme's objectives; it was expected to generate substantial global benefit as well as sustainable development for the local communities. The global environmental objective is the conservation of sustainable use of biological diversity in Baa Atoll; the project document indicated the global environmental benefits to include significant direct, indirect option and passive use (existence and bequest) value of biological diversity in Baa Atoll. *"The global direct use values spring from the Maldives' unique location in the middle of the Indian Ocean – shallow productive marine atolls in the middle of the deep Indian Ocean serving as a global reservoir of coral and other marine species. In particular, the Maldivian atolls are believed to act as stepping-stones, promoting recruitment and genetic flow right across the Indian Ocean. To the global stakeholder, one immediate direct use value accrues in the form of protected ecosystems as scientific laboratories yielding anticipated new information enabling global society to avoid the potentially irreversible losses of species, habitats, biodiversity. Other global direct use values include biological support to seabirds, seaturtles, fisheries and other ecosystems. The biological diversity and atoll ecosystem health preserves future options to rebuild, preserve, or augment other degraded marine environments and other future direct and indirect use of species, habitats, biodiversity. Passive use values include the global existence value arising from nontrivial per capita existence values multiplied by the hundreds of millions of citizens around the world who hold these values".*

UNDP is the GEF implementing agency while the Government is the executing agency. The project plan and budget, including US\$2.73 million of GEF funding and US\$4.65 million of co-financing, were approved in 2004 for an initial duration of 5 years, until 2009. The severe disruption caused by the December 2004 tsunami, and subsequent difficulties in recruiting staff and in mobilization delayed the start of field activities. An inception workshop was held in July 2005; staff changes contributed further to slow progress.

An independent Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) to assess project's performance over the first three years was carried out in August 2008; in June 2008, the decision was taken by the project's supervising body, the Tri-Partite Review (TPR), to extend the project until December 2010; in 2007, the Project Steering Committee (PSC) took the decision to further extend it until December 2012.

2.2 Socio-economic background and interlinkages with biodiversity in the Maldives²

The Maldives archipelago is a chain of 1,190 small sand low-lying islands grouped into 26 coral atolls, 820km over an area of 90,000 sq km, located on the Laccadives-Chagos submarine ridge, and supporting the largest group of coral reefs in the Indian Ocean.

The Maldives are one of the wealthiest countries in the Asian region; real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rates rose from minus 4.6 percent in 2005 to a record of 18 percent in 2006 before slowing to more conventional rates in 2009 (under 5 percent) with a GDP per capita of US\$ 2,800. For 2012, growth is expected to be within 3 to 4 percent. Nonetheless the country has an extremely economic narrow base dominated by tourism which accounts for 27 percent of GDP, followed by fisheries, construction and commerce altogether contributing between 5 and 10 percent of GDP. The population of the Maldives (over 300,000 people in 2010, one third of which living in the capital city Malé, the rest being scattered over 194 islands) is extremely vulnerable when considering that: i) the coral atolls on which it lives are ecologically extremely fragile, ii) total land area suitable for human habitation is less than 1%, iii) the economy is highly dependent on tourism and fishing, both sectors being vulnerable to external factors as well as to natural disasters and iv) face the challenge of climate change in an incomparable way with relation to other countries having 80 percent of the islands less than a meter above sea level. A Population and Development Consolidation Programme is pursued, whereby people living on environmentally vulnerable islands or islands with fewer than 1,000 people will be provided incentives to resettle in other islands.

Freshwater is one of the scarcest resources in the country. There is almost no surface water; the traditional sources of water are shallow groundwater aquifers which are increasingly becoming depleted in many islands as extraction exceeds natural recharge; in addition the intrusion of salt and waste into the aquifer makes water unsuitable for drinking. The Water and Sanitation Policy identifies the provision of safe drinking water as equally important as any other economic activity and outlines the challenges to meet the targets. Desalinated water is available in the capital city but at a high cost for the Government while most islands rely on rain water harvesting which constitutes the primary source of drinking water in 90% of the outer islands with groundwater being used for washing and other domestic uses. In some islands the water collected through the house's zinc roofs has been reported as of low quality.

Land/beach erosion is a serious issue in many islands and waste disposal is another key factor of vulnerability. Improper waste disposal and unsustainable coastal practices threaten the corals reefs which are not only important for coastal protection but are the mainstay of both the fisheries and tourism sectors. There is no municipal collection system for household waste; in Baa Atoll islands waste is usually carried to collection sites, burnt when possible or shipped to the primary landfill of the country, Thilafushi, sometimes with the help of a tourist resort island.

The fragility of the situation and the undeniable linkages between coastal resources and economic and human well being became more apparent during the 2004 tsunami which severely affected the country's economy and population by causing a severe destruction of infrastructure, especially in the tourism and fishing industry. The recent global economic downturn and increase in oil prices are a cause of concern, especially for the tourism industry.

² This chapter information, taken mainly from the State of the Environment Report, 2011, Ministry of Environment & Energy and Valuing Biodiversity, 2009, IUCN for AEC, is intended to update the project context with relation to its original identification.

Climate change is recognized as the major environmental problem for the Maldives. Adaptation measures are under development with priority given to integrating climate change risk considerations into island land use planning, coastal protection and coastal development. Atoll based adaptation measures are not identified. Notwithstanding the 2004 tsunami, the country does not have a disaster management plan. UNDP/GEF supports the development of a strategy to mainstream risk planning and climate change adaptation into the policy and planning framework across all sectors; the country has expressed the priority of reaching carbon neutrality by 2020.

2.3 The AEC Project main stakeholders

Since the AEC Project was designed in 2004, significant legislative and administrative changes occurred. The first multi-party election took place in 2008 opening the country to a process of democratization, regionalization and decentralization of administrative power with the establishment of a new local government system through the **Decentralisation Act**; regionalisation has divided the country into seven regions, with the aim of achieving efficient and effective service delivery at local levels. The previous system of Atoll and Island Chiefs appointed by the President was changed and the country's first ever local **Atoll Councils** and **Island Councils** elections were held in 2010 and 2011 respectively. These entities are responsible for developing Atoll Development Plans and Islands Development Plans. Atoll Development Committees and Island Development Committees no longer exist while the Women Development Committee (WDC) survived the process of changes but were only elected very recently.

In the period the AEC Project was implemented, Government changed several times and so the names of the different ministries, including the Ministry of Environment hosting the AEC Project, alternatively emphasizing the focus of its mandate either on environment or on infrastructure/housing. There is no single designated responsible agency for biodiversity conservation which causes overlapping mandates between line-ministries. The current **Ministry of Environment and Energy** has the broad mandate to assess and manage environmental resources including to conserve marine and coastal biodiversity and promote sustainable economic and development practices; the mandate overlaps in some cases with those of other ministries, in particular the Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture. The **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)**, created in 2008 by merging the previous Environmental Research Centre and Maldives Water & Sanitation Authority, is the environment legal regulatory entity established under MEE. The two main legislative frameworks are the Fisheries Law (1970) and the Environmental Law (1993)³.

The current **Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture (MoFA)** has the mandate to conserve all living and non-living marine resources as well as conserving all natural resources on uninhabited islands. It has the responsibility to set guidelines and develop policies to ensure sustainable fishing and agricultural activities. The Ministry has the objective of both conserving and promoting sustained livelihoods from fisheries which are one of the most important sources of livelihoods. However, there is a lack of appropriate management plans for fishery resources that also incorporate conservation and sustainable development aspects. In applying the ecosystem approach to fisheries, incentives and disincentives to conservation are of particular importance. The **Marine Research Centre (MRC)** under MoFA is responsible for fisheries, coral reef, marine biodiversity and mariculture research. It also provides advice on the status of living marine resources and management recommendations based on that information.

The current **Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture (MTAC)** is the main national institution for the tourism sector. It imposes rules and guidelines governing the operation of resorts and other tourist activities. It specifically has the mandate to set up and monitor compliance with environmental policies for the tourism sector, on the development and operations of resorts, dive sites, marinas and solid waste management and

³ The current policy framework is reviewed in the chapter under Relevance below.

to develop standards for Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs). In addition, it is responsible for the conservation of all flora and fauna on resort islands. Under the AEC project, it looks at developing new environmental guidelines for resort island selection; it reviews and if necessary updates the mandate of the Tourism Advisory Board to include ecosystem management objectives; it develops the tourism component of AEC Project strategy and plans. It is the key ministry for increasing government financing for conservation, through implementing user fee/conservation fees that the studies on willingness to pay (WTP) indicate for tourists in the Maldives.

The previous Ministry of Planning and National Development became in 2008 the **Department of National Development** run under the **Ministry of Finance and Treasury (MTF)**; it is responsible for planning, facilitating and coordinating national development. It formulates policies on socio-economic development, formulates and implements development consolidation strategies, develops standards for socio-economic services and infrastructure and undertakes social and economic research. Its plans, policies and activities impact the sustainability of marine and coastal biodiversity at all levels. The Department needs to work closely with the Ministry of Environment in developing national policies and plans as well as ensure that future National Development Plans are comprehensive and inclusive. It hosts and maintains the National Geographic Information System (GIS).

The **Ministry of Gender and Family (MGF)** has the mission to protect the rights of children and women, to overcome the obstacles that are present in all fields which hold back gender equality, to provide help for women and children who are abused by another citizen or party, to protect the rights of the disabled and the elderly and to strengthen family relations.

The **entire population of the Maldives and in particular the Baa Atoll community** including fishermen, farmers and businessmen are the main AEC Project stakeholders: their livelihoods are almost entirely dependent on biodiversity mainly through fisheries and tourism employment; their health and nutrition are completely reliant on natural resources; their activities contribute to the national accounts but also have a huge impact on biodiversity at local level. While they are aware of the importance of the coastal and marine ecosystem of Baa Atoll, capacity building is required to make them understand the economic values of fisheries, shoreline protection and tourism. They are also an important source of information for assessing the status of the ecosystems.

The most important economic stakeholder is the tourism sector which includes the private tourist resorts, safari boats, and tourist themselves. There are about 90 resorts scattered around the various islands, 8 of which are in Baa Atoll itself with another 2 or 3 under construction. Approximately 90% of resort activities are dependent on the coastal and marine ecosystem as tourists mainly come to the Maldives for diving, snorkelling, and visiting the local islands. Tourists also hire safari boats, some of which are quite modest local boats adapted to the cruising needs but others may have several rooms and offer facilities that are at par with resorts. While resorts and safari boats have adopted various measures to conserve the local biodiversity, safari boats need to be involved in the overall conservation practices in a far more coordinated way. The preservation and conservation of coastal and marine resources is of particular importance to resorts, safari boats and tourists as they all depend on these ecosystems: their benefits are extensive but their losses would also be quite large if biodiversity was degraded or even lost. These losses would ultimately have adverse impacts on the whole economy and the people.

There are approximately 500 **NGOs** registered with the Ministry of Home Affairs. These are reported to be fragmented, lack coordination and communication as well as capacity and funding; they mostly work on youth related activities. Baa Atoll has a number of NGOs working on various initiatives, including conservation and sustainable development and waste management. Unfortunately, the visibility of their activities is minimal; funding is a major problem and it is usually done through sponsorships linked to a particular activity. At the island level, they are often seen as competitors by local authorities. Nonetheless

they have a major role to play if capacity building and an enabling environment is provided so that NGOs and the local administration can work together.

The **media** is another important actor, which can be effectively utilized to promote the message of the ecosystem approach and in particular to relay the specific values of Maldivian and Baa Atoll biodiversity to a broader audience.

2.4 Baa Atoll

Baa Atoll lies to the northwest of Male', and has a total area of approximately 1,200 km². The atoll is formed of 75 islands, 13 of which are inhabited with a combined population of approximately 11,000 people. 8 islands have been developed as resorts; the remaining islands are uninhabited and are leased by the Government to individuals or communities for activities such as coconut and timber harvesting, small-scale agriculture and daily tourist visits.

Baa Atoll's economy and employment highly depends on tourism which employs 61% of the working population with 40% of households having members employed primarily in resorts but also in safari boat operations, dive centres and tourism related activities such as reef fishing (fin fish, lobster). Although some resorts are more accessible, they mostly receive high-level income guests. Sonevafushi, the first resort to be established in 1983, has an extremely environmentally friendly management including an Eco-Centre (where waste is appropriately treated and recycled), a garden which provides a good quantity of organic vegetables for guests' consumption, photovoltaic system and desalinized water production. Most resorts provide for some kind of waste treatment and recycling; waste which cannot be treated is shipped to Thilafushi island. Resorts eventually reinvest some of their earning into community development (i.e. Sonevafushi has a sort of corporate social responsibility policy utilising 1.5% of total revenues in projects to sustain local communities; 50% of Royal Resort employees are from the atoll and mostly from Eydhafushi and they are provided with outstanding facilities including the possibility to go home at night).

Whilst resorts have become the main economic driver, tuna and reef fishing remains the second most important economic activity engaging more than 40% of households. Agricultural activities are minimal with a larger potential in Goidhoo but not completely exploited. Production of handicrafts and other materials for the tourist industry is developing, especially in Tulhadhoo.

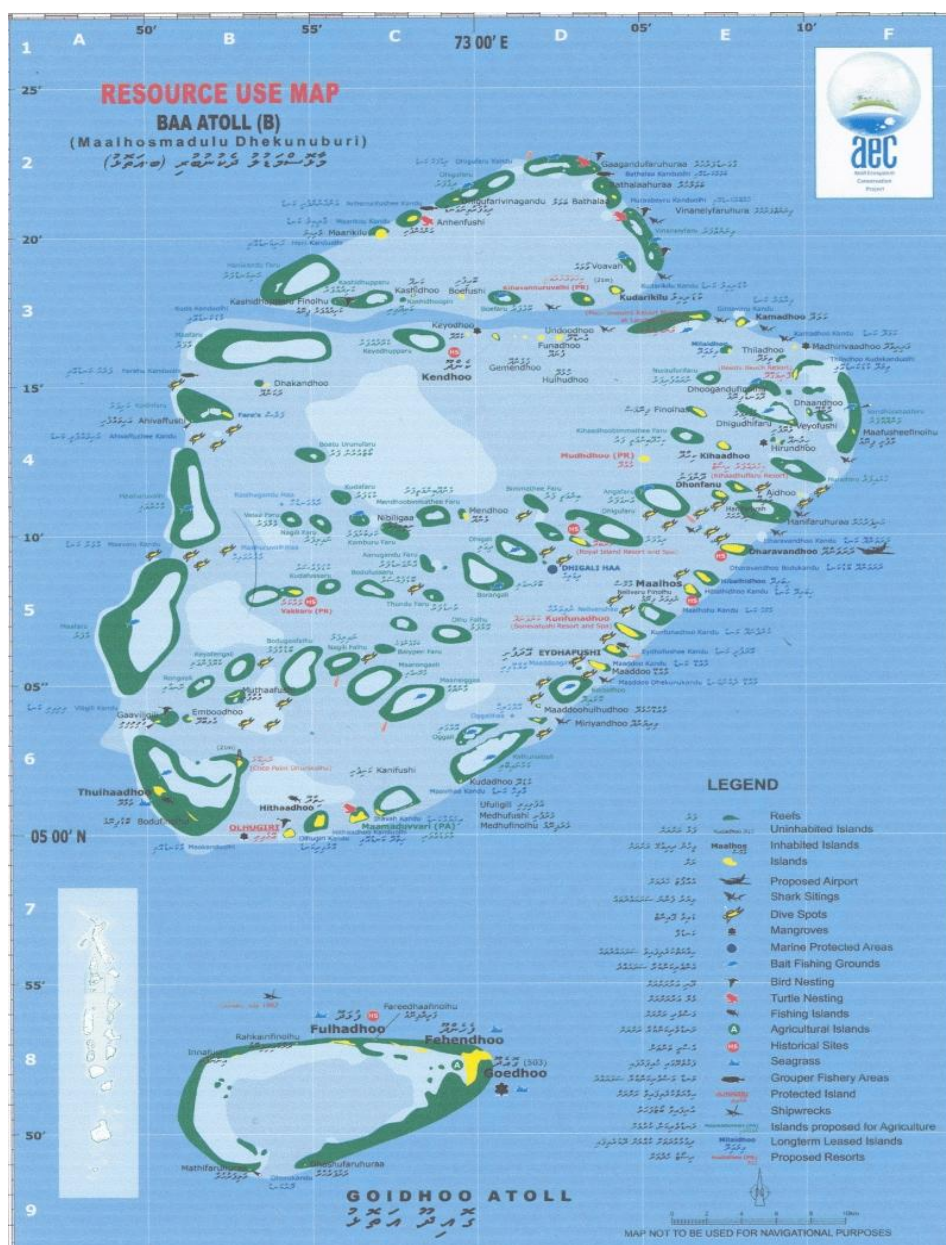
Waste management is the single most urgent environmental problem in inhabited islands. The first component of the World Bank (WB) Maldives Environmental Management Project concerns regional solid waste management; due to stringent environmental impact assessment procedures, the project has been expected for years. As far as Baa Atoll is concerned, it envisages the collection of waste from Baa Atoll and another three atolls to be brought for treatment to Vaadhoo Island, in Raa Atoll.

The new airport in Dharavandoo Island, recently put in operation, provides employment for 60% of the island's working population, it is a less expensive alternative to sea plane for resorts and, although more expensive than speed boats, it is a quicker transport mean for the atoll population, especially useful during emergencies.

Baa Atoll, was selected as the pilot site for the AEC Project on the basis of eight criteria: globally significant biodiversity; national significance; local commitment; local capacity; potential to address threats to biodiversity; potential for demonstrating sustainable uses; potential for co-funding; and logistical practicality. Hanifaru Bay is considered one of the few places in the world where whale sharks congregate in to mate. The Bay is also home to some of the largest gatherings of Manta rays worldwide which happens in large numbers when the tide pushes plankton into the bay. Baa Atoll also harbours a unique diversity of benthic fauna, including rare pink hydrozoan corals (*Distichopora nitida*), Bryozoans (*Bugula*) and sea slugs

(*Tambja olivaria*) that are only recorded from Baa Atoll. It has a particularly high density of the ring-shaped reef forms called faroes, a peculiar reef structure unique to the Maldives. Baa Atoll also has one of the largest areas of mangroves in the central part of the Maldivian atoll chain, and one of only two roosting sites in the Maldives for the frigate bird (more than 10,000 individuals).

At project start, only two protected areas existed; today additional 8 protected areas have been declared and the boundaries of the first two have been expanded. Hanifaru Bay is now the only PA of the country with a gazetted management plan under implementation. Draft management plans exist for other PAs, developed under the AEC Project and waiting to be finalised by EPA. At project start, virtually no human or financial resources were specifically directed to atoll ecosystem or biodiversity conservation.



3. FINDINGS

3.1 Project Design / Formulation

3.1.1 Project logic and strategy

Designed between 2001 and 2004 using GEF PDF A and PDF B grants, the AEC Project was perfectly aligned with policy requirements and local natural resources conservation and livelihoods needs. A participatory design proposed an **ecosystem approach**⁴ for biodiversity conservation and sustainable development based on the recognition of: i) the undeniable linkages between natural coastal resources and biodiversity with the country's economic prosperity and social development, and ii) the fact that conventional approaches to conservation had not proved effective. An integrated perspective on conservation and resource management was taken where biological diversity was not accounted for simply as the number of species but for the complex interaction between the physical environment and the biological communities.

Originally envisaged to be implemented over a period of 5 years, two project extensions led to nearly a decade of implementation within a very volatile operating environment, characterized by various Government changes including the first multi-party election in 2008 which opened the door to a process of democratization, regionalization and decentralization which is still on-going. The original budget amounted to US\$8,698,050 of which 2,730,100 by GEF (including the amount spent for PDF A and PDF B), 4,653,370 from Government and other partners' co-financing plus an anticipated leveraging amounting to 1,314,580.

Designed to test the effectiveness of a system of natural resource use planning and management that builds ecological conservation into decision-making, the Project was as relevant at its start in 2004 as it is today with relation to regional and national planning objectives and the constitutional reform; the promotion of an effective, innovative dialogue and collaboration among line-ministries on one side and private stakeholders (mainly local communities and the tourism and fisheries industries) on the other side is the mechanism to reach the three integrated and complementary outcomes, as revised during the 2008 planning revision. UNDP/GEF is a major donor in the environmental sector. The WB Maldives Environmental Management Project, with a budget of US\$13.15 million, has a waste management component which is complementary to the AEC Project.

The original Logframe and Results-based Framework proved very difficult to understand and apply for the project team and for the Government; the Inception Phase in 2005 faced the problem but it failed to revise the Logframe into a practical planning and monitoring tool, able to provide clear strategic guidance. Other attempts to modify planning were done in 2006 and 2007, but it was only after the August 2008 MTR and following its recommendations, that a more serious attempt was made to update the Logframe according to the evolving situation and transform it into a more operational tool. Although the Consultant share the findings of the MTE that the original design was overly complex and somehow confusing, some original guiding elements and even some of the MTE recommendations, especially in terms of indicators, were overlooked. The analysis of the current Logframe (reported in [Annex E](#)) evidences:

⁴ The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) defines the ecosystem approach as: "A strategy for the integrated management of land, water and living resources that promote conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way". It distinguishes from more conventional approaches to conservation by: i) putting people (rather than biodiversity) at the heart of natural resources management, ii) extending biodiversity management beyond protected areas, to whole ecosystems, iii) engaging a full range of sectoral interests in an integrated way, iv) decentralizing management and governance to the lowest appropriate level; v) recognizing that (climate) change is inevitable, and promoting adaptation strategies to deal with change.

- **Goal:** it has correctly been revised to express the national (the Maldives) value of the protection instead of the local (Baa Atoll) value.
Goal indicators: two target indicators have been selected from the original design; in terms of means of verification they lost specificity.
- **Purpose:** the formulation has correctly been changed expressing a more focused approach; however it is not correctly formulated as a statement.
Purpose indicators: they are completely absent.
- **Outcome N.1 and relative outputs:** the outcome has been reformulated in a more focused way and two out of five outputs have been selected, the first one being almost a repetition of the outcome.
Indicators: target indicators are now expressed at output instead than at outcome level. Some targets combine more than one indicator; otherwise they are mostly correct and time-bound. With relation to the original formulation, the reference to training and capacity building at the different levels is lacking.
- **Outcome N.2 and relative outputs:** it has been reformulated without changing the meaning; the original formulation was more adequate, making reference to stakeholders and sustainability (both words are lost in the new formulation). 3 instead than 5 outputs have been selected: they all refer to the Baa Atoll Conservation Programme: programme established, management system established and implementation of the Programme. The new formulation is certainly more straightforward.
Indicators: target indicators are now expressed at output instead than outcome level. They are mostly well formulated and time-bound. Reference to capacity building and training is absent.
- **Outcome N.3 and relative outputs:** the original formulation has not been changed; 3 out of 6 outputs have been selected, easier to understand and more in tune with reality.
Indicators: target indicators are now expressed at output instead than outcome level. They are mostly well formulated and time-bound. Reference to capacity building and training is absent.
- **Activities:** activities are not specified and there is no evidence that this has been done globally in any moment. Activities are specified in annual work plans.

Overall the current Logframe reformulation provides a much more operational tool for planning and management but with weaknesses which are not simple design formalities but instead have important repercussions on management and monitoring. In particular these are: i) the absence of the purpose indicators, the major tools to assess effects and impact; ii) failure to further develop indicators and distinguish outcome and output indicators in a way to allow easy annual monitoring of activities and measurement of achievement in different moments of project implementation; the idea of conducting a workshop to better define indicators never materialised; iii) given the general recognized lack of capacity in the country, the need to focus on national and local capacity development and training and reflect it in the indicators allowing management to never lose sight of this key area. Although the original design was centred around the necessity to know the biodiversity of the atoll and collect baseline environmental data through the mobilization of a far too large number of international consultants, more appropriate focus was given to the need to increase technical and managerial capacities; iv) the need to properly define risks and assumptions to allow management of risk.

3.1.2 The management of risk

Risks and assumptions were more adequate in the project document; those defined in the revised Logframe mostly refer to elements under management control and therefore are not appropriately formulated. The Adaptive Management Advisor (AMA) made an effort to manage risks but not in a way to fully consider external factors and manage them as part of planning and monitoring (Logframe). The Consultant believes that at the least the following issues should have been considered to be able to anticipate challenges and take remedial measures: i) the difficult acceptance that a soft and large environmental project could have represented for a population and a government used to think in terms of development of infrastructure (*ensure proper and early awareness activities*); ii) the need for government

and therefore involved ministries to assign sufficient and appropriate managerial staff (*ensure early commitment*); iii) the general lack of technical and managerial capacity both in terms of qualifications but most importantly in terms of numbers of people available, especially to be posted in “outer” atolls (*ensure basic implementation conditions*); iv) climate change, a major risk in the Maldives; most likely, at project start, it was not recognised as a major problem and the question of adaptation measures to climate change was not yet established in development thinking as it is today. However as project progressed, taking this component into account would have probably led to envisage atoll-based community vulnerability assessments (and therefore to study elements such as islands rainfall patterns, storm frequency, sea surface temperature on coral reefs, sea-level rise and adaptive measures) and eventually to link with other correlated activities⁵; v) the possibility that tourism declines as an effect of the global economic crisis (alternative support and livelihoods); vi) the possibility that changes in government may result in different conservation priorities (commitment from line ministries); vii) local residents willingness to change unsustainable practices (awareness).

3.1.3 Stakeholder involvement and Project Management Arrangements

The AEC Project is a full-sized GEF Project with UNDP as the GEF implementing agency and the Government of Maldives responsible for execution through its Ministry of the Environment in partnership with key line-ministries. The Project provides for an effective and inclusive participation of stakeholders at government and non-government levels including: MoFA, EPA, MTAC, MFT/Department of National Planning, MRC, Ministry of Home Affairs⁶. At local level, the Atoll Council, Island Development Councils and Women Development Committees (WDC) are the main stakeholders⁷. Private stakeholders include: the Maldives Association of Tourism Industry (MATI), the Liveaboard Association (LAM), other safari boats not belonging to LAM, Dive Centres, resorts, fishermen, farmers, the community in general and national and local NGOs.

Project management arrangements:

- **MEE:** project execution in partnership with line ministries;
- **UNDP Country Office:** supervisory role, implementation support, management of the GEF budget, recruitment of international consultants, equipment procurement; monitoring of implementation;
- **PSC:** chaired by MEE, it integrates MoFA, EPA, MTAC, MFT/Department of National Planning, MATI, MRC, Baa Atoll Council, UNDP, Baa NGOs; charged with overall strategic policy and implementation guidance and support; oversees project implementation, progress, achievements; approves major changes in project plans; constitutes a forum for stakeholders’ input and discussion; provides for conflict resolution or disagreements; integrates project-inspired activities into existing programs and practices;
- **National Project Director (NPD):** a staff member of MEE; oversees proper project implementation;
- **Project Management Unit (PMU):** a Project Manager (PM) also acting as National Partnership Builder sits in the Malé office (within MEE premises) supported by a Financial and an Administrative Officer, a boat captain and 2 crew people. Until almost 2009, most activities were led from Malé without a continued presence in Baa Atoll (the decision was taken based on the difficulty of recruiting national staff willing to live on outer islands); an office was established in Eydhafushi supported by the Atoll Chief (at the time, a visionary supporter of the AEC Project); however with the 2008 political changes these arrangements collapsed. Since 2009 the local office has been run by the Atoll Coordinator. A

⁵ Possibly the GEF Project Integrating Climate Change Risks into Resilient Island Planning in the Maldives (ICCR) and the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) and the European Union Climate Change Trust Fund administered under the WB.

⁶ During Project implementation ministries changed names, sometimes more than once as it is the case for the Ministry of the Environment. To facilitate reading, the Consultant always refers to current ministries names.

⁷ Previously Atoll Chief, Island Chief, Atoll Development Committee, Island Development Committee and Women Development Committee.

Communication Officer was recruited in 2007 but left in 2009; as the Project was due to end, the Communication Officer was never recruited again notwithstanding the following project extensions.

The AEC Project was to serve as a task force to assist involved ministries to develop a shared vision on the ecosystem approach. Current arrangements indicate that the envisaged Project Working Group and Atoll Working Groups have not been established; the MTE suggested that once the Project's vision was agreed, each ministry could have assigned one or more permanent staff members to work directly with the Project for creating the foreseen inter-ministerial dialogue. The PMU considered this unfeasible and preferred to work with ministries' focal points, establishing a less formal way of gathering but still an effective working partnership between the PMU and line-ministries.

The PSC is integrated by technicians and has met every year since 2006 except once. There has been a high turnover of representatives from some entities. A few PSC representatives reported that these meetings could have been better organised, announcing them in advance and submitting relevant basic documents with sufficient time for preparation. The PM informs that the Committee was able to provide guidance; however this is difficult to appreciate from the not particularly outstanding meeting reports. Reporting appears generally weak as we will see in other sections of this document; apparently this does not necessarily represent a technical weakness or a lack of interest but a habit of oral communication. Without an evident reason, Tripartite Reviews (TPR) meetings have been discontinued since 2009.

In June 2012 the Biosphere Reserve Office (BRO) has been established in Eydhafushi, the capital of Baa Atoll currently composed of four staff: i) the Managing Director (MD): recently recruited (8 months) and posted on Baa Atoll after 3 months induction course in EPA; ii) a Conservation Officer: recently recruited (2 months) charged with the implementation of the Baa Atoll Conservation Programme; iii) an Officer currently acting as both Outreach Officer and Livelihood Officer: he was the previous Atoll Coordinator and has been in place since 2009; iv) a ranger: mainly occupied with control and enforcement of regulations in Hanifaru protected area. An organigram has been drafted and endorsed for a larger team to be in place soon. The BR Advisory Board is composed of 11 members including one representative from EPA (the chairman), Baa Atoll Council, an Island Council, the fishing sector (an active fisherman or a boat owner), the Local Government Authority, MTAC, MoFA, the MG of the Baa Atoll Biosphere Reserve, Resorts operating in Baa Atoll that signed partnership agreements with the Project, the LAM; two independent experts in the fields of biodiversity conservation, sustainable livelihoods development and education/learning.

The concept behind the original design of the AEC Project was that biodiversity information about the area was lacking and that surveying, assessing, monitoring and understanding was essential. An overly complex management strategy included the recruitment of a series of national and international consultants and UN Volunteers to supplement a small team of full-time staff (28 positions) were envisaged; apart from the PMU staff, a smaller number of international experts have been effectively mobilised. The Consultant shares the opinion of the MTE that the "human resources plan for the project was inappropriate and unrealistic"⁸. Nonetheless, although the provision of such a large number of international consultants would not have been the solution, a more focused approach to increase national and local capacities was necessary considering that this is the recurrent theme in the Maldives, understood as both lack of expertise as well as lack of available people. The question is especially evident when positions are announced for Baa Atoll: there are few candidates with the required qualifications willing to live on the atoll. A Capacity Building expert has been posted for two months in Baa Atoll to support the BR staff in the management of the office, to transform the Baa Atoll Conservation Program into a management plan for the BR and

⁸ "...It is especially disconcerting that the approved Project Document proposes such a group, of 19 expatriate specialist consultants and volunteers in senior and highly-paid positions, to implement what is supposed to be a pilot for a model marine resource conservation system that is appropriately sustainable and replicable in low- to middle- income countries similar to Maldives", MTE, August 2008.

eventually finalize the already prepared draft management plans of some PAs. This is more than necessary; however, it is unlikely that a two months input can solve the problem; very appropriately EPA is committed to sustain the BR as necessary during the initial period of its establishment.

3.2 Project Implementation

3.2.1 Implementation approach and adaptive management

There are different concurrent reasons for which the AEC Project can be evaluated as largely successful; the effective application of adaptive management certainly scores very high. In addition to the 2004 tsunami which caused disruption and almost stopped project activities, the AEC Project was implemented during a very instable political and operating environment which required a good amount of flexibility from all partners. Until 2007, in addition to these difficulties, lack of guidance was evident both in terms of management and of planning tools; activities were almost completely out of track.

At the end of 2007 the Adaptive Management Advisor was hired coinciding with the identification of a new Project Manager and an almost completely new team. The professional skills of these two key managers, and the instrumental push provided by the MTE led the AEC Project into a new, more effective implementation phase towards the achievement of practical outputs and results. Their capacity to provide mentoring assistance and build relationships at both national and Baa Atoll level and the recognised potential for achieving results led UNDP and GEF to approve two project extensions; an exceptional way of proceeding for GEF which provided the opportunity to implement many of the recommendations of the MTE in a way to effectively increase public and private understanding of biodiversity conservation, increase the political profile of the Project and champion a vision for atoll ecosystem-based conservation; today this is recognised at the highest political level through the visionary approach of the President of the Maldives who announced in Rio+20 the intention to have the entire country as a Biosphere Reserve in 5 years time.

Within the volatile political environment characterized by various national and local political elections, another important feature of adaptive management is the very appropriate decision to limit to the minimum the PMU pro-active approach during the two months preceding elections; although this caused additional delays, it avoided the project to become politicised. As a result the AEC Project received support from both the current Atoll and Island administrations as well as by the previous Atoll and Island Chiefs.

3.2.2 Stakeholder participation

Maldives is a key example of the intrinsic link between biodiversity and all aspects of human development. All stakeholders described in the context above have a clear economic stake in conservation and sustainable development; they benefit from the country's rich resource base and also incur costs from its degradation. The AEC Project (and the Ministry of the Environment) was well placed to ensure that all stakeholders were effectively involved to contribute in their specific ways to the desired outcomes. The PMU has worked hard to build trust as it could be appreciated during the interviews for the respect it gained from national and local stakeholders.

National Government level. The original project design envisaged the constitution of Working Groups which however was not considered feasible. The PMU established a good working relationship with decision-makers and technicians in ministries where focal points were nominated to work with the Project. At a higher management level, participating stakeholders met once a year during the PSC. EPA became the key institution supporting activities in the field; after 2009 when the Project was expected to end, the PM encouraged EPA technical staff to be in the front line to ensure future sustainability; since then, EPA has

remained the key partner entity. The overlapping mandates of MEE and MoFA sometimes caused some difficulties although did not impede the work of the PMU.

Local Government Level. The Project has been able to establish good working relationships both with the previous Atoll and Islands Chiefs as well as with the current administration. Their participation in workshops and seminars for land use planning, for the elaboration of the island and atoll development plans and the zonation system provided the occasion to involve them in effective field work as well as raise awareness and start a process of capacity development. Representatives from the previous Island, Atoll and Women Development Committees participated; interviews confirmed the usefulness of the work carried out and its significance for the on-going decentralisation process. During the last months transition from the AEC Project to the BR, a gap in communication is reported from local stakeholders at almost all levels.

Private sector level. The private sector - the tourism industry – has been fully involved in project activities. The relationship has been initially smoother with resorts to gradually extend to operating diving centres and safari boats. Resorts tried to establish a sort of coordination mechanism (today called the BAARU project) as an attempt to auto-regulate themselves with relation to the Hanifaru Bay's visits. Consultations about the decision to promote the BR concept with UNESCO resulted in 9 partnerships agreements signed which commit resorts and safari boats to pay annual quotas to the Baa Atoll Conservation Fund for the maintenance of the BR and to the benefit of local people. The absence of fishermen associations makes more difficult to obtain the commitment of fishermen but awareness raising is on-going.

Community level. Community members were involved in different ways: i) seminars and workshops for land use planning and for the island and atoll development plans included staff who are clearly also members of their communities; Atoll and Islands Chiefs/Councils consulted the communities in different moments; awareness raising events were organised in schools; all households received a letter from MEE informing about the BR. Considering that the country is coming out from a very centralised system, these activities represent the first step of the decentralisation of powers, self-determination and ownership.

3.2.3 Financial planning and expenditures

The AEC Project budget amounted to US\$8.3 million over 5 years, including US\$2.37 million of GEF funds and US\$5.92 million of co-financing. It is quite difficult to reconstruct the way co-financing has materialised as no party seems to have accurately monitored it; based on available information, the table below attempts to report on co-financing:

Table N .2 Co-financing

Co-financing (type/source)	UNDP own financing (US\$)		Government (US\$)		Partner Agency /Private Sector (US\$)	
	Planned *	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned ***	Actual ****
Grants						
Loans/ Concessions	• 1,295,000	• 271,765 Truc Funds	• 3,010,000	• 145,915 • 250,000 BACF**	• 74,370 Resorts • 87,000 Japan • 142,000 FAO/MFAMR	• 60,000 pledged • 80,000 (possible) • 6,192 • N/A • N/A
In-kind support				• 449,785		

* Sources of funding included: i) Atoll Development Project, ii) ICT Project; iii) Pearl Culture Project and iv) funding for M&E

** US\$ 50,000 have already been allocated; the others 200,000 are annual allocation for the next years

***There is no records of allocations from Japan and FAO/MFAMR (previous MoFA)

**** Allocations from the tourist private sector are funds already disbursed to BACF (6,192 from diving schools, LAM, certification fees), pledges (US\$ 60,000 corresponding to 3 resorts) while others commitments have been announced but not yet concretised (4 additional resorts and therefore additional US\$ 80,000).

The Project Document reports budget allocations by each of the three outcomes and by the 16 envisaged outputs according to funding coming either through the GEF or through the expected multi-sources co-financing. GEF funding was mostly allocated to Outcome 1 and secondly to Outcome 2 with a minimum part to Outcome 3. On the other hand, the bulk of co-financing was allocated to Outcome 3, partly to Outcome 2 and only a small amount to Outcome 1. The analysis of the original budget allocation by sources of co-financing indicates among others that UNDP co-financing was allocated completely to Outcome 3, except for US\$ 70,000 allocated to Outcome 2 for M&E activities.

In 2008, the project outputs have been re-worked out with the revision of planning which resulted in a new Logframe (with a reduction from 16 to the current 8 outputs); current and past allocations comparison is difficult as the original type of funding allocation is never found again in project planning. Budget allocations are visible in the annual workplan by outcome and by output (and even by activity); however they are not divided by financing sources and, in this format, are available only starting from 2008. It is however possible to visualise differences in outcome allocations as in the following table:

Table N.3 Budget allocations

	Initial allocation (million USD)			Final allocation (million US\$) *			Final Expenditures		
	GEF	Co-financing	Total	GEF	Co-financing	Total	GEF	Co-financing	UNDP/Truc Funds
Outcome 1	824	1,500	2,324	670	NA		5,585.07	NA	101,574
Outcome 2	1,283	1,440	2,723	1,076	NA		367,473.28	NA	80,235
Outcome 3	263	2,982	3,245	561	NA		237,059.49	NA	87,436
Outcome 4	-	-		662	NA		1,054,652.18	NA	2,519

*Figures taken from the MTE

The analysis of the available information indicates that: i) the way initial allocations were made highlights clearly that mainstreaming and livelihood activities could have been implemented in a balanced way only if both GEF and the envisaged co-financing were available. However there are no records that the co-financing budget has been managed in any way by the PMU and it appears quite evident that the budget for Outcome 3 has been strongly reduced; ii) the analysis of the information provided by UNDP on its Truc Fund expenditures highlights a total expenditures of 271,765 divided in a more or less similar way between the 3 outcomes; iii) data are not available on the expenditures on each output and so it is difficult to compare with annual work plans, also in the years for which these are available in the current format. In ATLAS, expenditures are recorded by the three outcomes, plus a forth outcome which has been added to record management expenses.

The project has been audited twice and only minor issues are reported; all interviewed people confirm the general sound management of funds and the good control exercised by UNDP.

Table N.4 Total expenditures until September 2012

Year	GEF (Allocations) and expenditures (US\$)	Co-financing (allocation) and expenditures (Government cash US\$)	In-kind
2004	51,226.92		
2005	-124,281.42		
2006	382,255.79		
2007	122,081.21		
2008	384,971.20	(32,425.42) – 30,998.70	
2009	390,202.88	(32,425.42) – 31,776.91	
2010	260,738.79	(32,425.42) – 32,425.42	
2011	167,468.63	(32,425.42) – 32,185.60	
2012	93,835.88	(16,212.71) – 12,688.72	
Total	1,728,499.88 (72.93% of total)	(145,914.40) – 140,075.36 (96% of total)	449,784.82
Balance	641,600.12 (27.02% of total)		
BACF	250.000	(250,000) – (50,000)	

*Figures for GEF annual allocations were not provided.

The analysis of the Project's financial records leads to the following conclusions:

- GEF funding have been almost completely utilised; considering the US\$250,000 pledged to the BACF, the GEF budget balance in September 2012 was US\$391,600, an amount which the AEC Project expects to utilise by the end of the year;
- Government co-financing considering cash contributions, in-kind valorisation and pledges to BACF amount to 845,700;
- limited to the Trac Funds, UNDP co-financing amount to US\$271,765;
- notwithstanding delays, the Ministry of Environment operated a very accurate control of funds expenditures as savings allowed the Project to go on for almost a decade without any increase in the original budget; most management periods finalised with a considerable amount of unspent funds (i.e. at the end of 2006 only 13% of the budget was spent);
- the registration of funds was not always clear and agreed between UNDP and the PMU; although later reconciled, discrepancies in the amounts of unspent funds emerged;
- saved resources are used to capitalise BACF (US\$ 250,000 from the GEF budget; US\$ 50,000 from the Government budget plus the allocation for the next years; resources from the tourist private sector) through which Outcome 3 will be implemented in the future within the BR management plan;
- the co-financing budget should have been monitored and confirmed at the highest levels. No mechanism was in place to ensure the committed co-financing was available to fund project activities.

Difficulties are registered during 2012 when the Project experienced a budgetary deficit due to a delay in the transfer of GEF funds from UNDP as a consequence of a problem materialised with the ICCR GEF project which spent only a small amount of the huge advance resources received; GEF rules indicate that unspent funds must be returned to UNDP at the end of each implementing year; as the Government was late in returning these funds, all transfers of resources to GEF projects were stopped until the problem was solved; in the meantime the AEC Project functioned with the co-financing which was almost exhausted.

An element is brought to the attention of UNDP management with relation to unspent UNDP Truc Funds allocated to specific livelihood activities in Outcome 3 (i.e. the Women Development Project with the MGF; the Goidhoo Agricultural Project with MoFA; the construction of the ferry terminal in Eydhafushi with the Atoll Council); a mechanism should be put in place to ensure unspent funds are utilised for the envisaged purpose; if not possible they should either be returned to UNDP or eventually utilised to integrate BACF so that they will be utilised for livelihood activities.

3.2.4 Monitoring and Evaluation and Communication (*) Rating: MS

Difficulties in understanding the original Logframe with its very large number of outputs and indicators translated into difficulties in Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) which appears to have been more structured only starting from 2009, with the preparation of the first annual workplan based on the revised Logframe. Following the recommendations of the MTE, project management started to budget not only by outcome but also by output and even by activity. The same workplan format is utilised for monitoring with a system of four colours which identifies activities completed/on track (green); activities initiated/which need attention (yellow); activities which have not been completed (red) and finally activities which are not yet due (blue). The system is utilised in the annual workplan and in the reports prepared by AMA.

However the revised Logframe is not fully utilised by the PMU as a monitoring tool; in fact: i) the type of monitoring carried out mainly look at the activities level and much less to indicators; ii) indicators in the Logframe identify broad products but they would have needed further sub-division/specification to make them more measurable and operational with reference to annual planning; iii) the baseline is very simply identified and does not really inform about the status of the indicator at project start; iv) indicators at the

purpose level are lacking; v) an annual “pause to reflect” on the significance of the achievements to be reflected in annual reporting is lacking; vi) financial monitoring is not linked to the annual workplan system as it appears to only register the outcome level and only for the GEF and for UNDP Truc funds; v) it would have been important to preserve the original intention to use information baseline on biodiversity condition and ecosystem health and measure it over time by maintaining time-series data; finally vi) considering the impact the Project has on stakeholders both at policy and local levels, awareness level surveys should have been conducted with key actors.

Reporting appears more a formality than a real monitoring exercise. Narrative reports are not produced; quarterly reports are produced according to standard UNDP requirements and consist in filling a list of activities in tabular format. The only annual reports produced are the Project Implementation Review (PIR) (from June to June) as per GEF requirement. A few pages monthly reports are produced in Divehi by the PMU for MEE. Overall reporting tends to be a listing of activities done, without deep thinking on the meaning of achievements. The most effective reporting mechanism is the one provided by AMA whose inputs are given mostly twice a year, occasionally three times and a report is made highlighting main achievements and what still needs to be done. AMA’s efforts to establish mechanisms to regularly report to stakeholders apparently did not succeed. [Annex G](#) is the Consultant’s summary report on achievements utilising the indicators of the Logframe.

The filing system has margin for improvement; most documents are in Malé and basically conserved in soft copies in the administrative officer computer; hard copies are eventually conserved but not systematically nor in order. A short-term international capacity building expert is in the process of transferring the entire package of documents to the BRO. The BRO organisation is very incipient; basic management procedures require to be urgently put in place and the office organised to receive people interested in getting information. Its main current reporting activity is the registration of entries in Hanifaru by the responsible ranger who reports daily to the BRO; here data are processed and reported monthly to EPA.

The Memorandum and Articles of Association and Rules of Procedures for the BACF (see below) identify basic monitoring procedures for the future projects to be financed through the Fund. Discussions are ongoing with UNDP to draw from the monitoring experience of GEF Small Grants and the Mangrove’s for the Future grants.

Training and Communication programs were developed by the AEC Project but have not been literally followed. Overall communication has been discontinued through project development and suffered from some of the deficiencies of the monitoring system. A Communication Officer helped developing some interesting tools: leaflets, nice AEC Project and then BR logos⁹, documents such as the Vision and the Ecosystem Approach with a dissemination purpose; but his presence has been limited (hired in 2007, he resigned in 2009 and was not replaced eventually because the Project was due to end and there would not have been enough time) with the result that some initiatives failed (only one number of the AEC Project Newsletter was published; the web site is reported to have been of poor quality and not regularly updated). Web sites for the BR and for BACF are under construction; a facebook page is available and a 40 minutes video-documentary is under preparation. The Eydhafushi local newspaper (www.edhafushitimes.com) reports the BR logo in the first page. Sport, in particular football, is a good vehicle for communication and the AEC Project made full profit of the occasion by distributing stickers of the BR to football players¹⁰. The International Maldives Postal Service is to issue the First Day cover stamp to celebrate Baa Atoll BR.

⁹ The two logos are very similar and some critics have been made that the BR logo is not easy to reproduce; the Consultant considers that the two logos provide for positive continuity.

¹⁰ Football is an extremely important activity, which mobilize the entire community; during the Consultant visit, football games were organized and it was possible to observe that BR panels are disseminated around the playing ground and that players dress the BR logo on their T-shirts; this is a vehicle for information dissemination as well as a way for the young to be continuously aware of living in a BR.

Notwithstanding many events are reported to have had good media coverage, records are not kept. The AEC Project should have ensured careful monitoring and reporting with communication tools developed at different level appropriate for different targets in order to ensure engagement and maintain the interest of all stakeholders.

3.2.5 UNDP and Implementing Partner implementation (*) and coordination Rating: S

UNDP provided the necessary support to the Project in terms of supervision, financial management and recruitment of international staff. During all the initial phases, it was evident that the Project needed more guidance and direction; although a different involvement of UNDP would have probably helped speeding up certain activities, the agency correctly interpreted its role as supportive and facilitating in addition to supervising progress and the management of funds. In any case, the presence of AMA since 2008 meant less need for UNDP staff to get involved in more daily management support. Inefficiencies are reported in terms of recruitment of international staff basically due to the internal bureaucracy entailed.

UNDP co-financing did not materialise in the amounts expected. However Truc Funds were made available to finance activities under the different outcomes.

GEF and UNDP flexibility in supporting two project extensions proved correct management decisions to ensure the achievement of results, given the difficult political and operational circumstances in the field.

3.3 Project Results

3.3.1 Overall results (attainment of objectives) (*) Rating: S

The AEC Project is regarded as the first large soft environmental project the country had and the most successful one in the environmental area, having achieved concrete results and international recognition. A project centred on an enhanced dialogue among stakeholders to produce a mechanism for biodiversity and natural resources conservation was difficult to be assumed in a country where large projects have always been related with the construction of infrastructure; compared with other GEF on-going projects (e.g. SLM; ICCR), its positive performance appears even more evident. Political turmoil and deep changes in the administrative structure had important repercussions on the operational and efficiency level. Democratisation and decentralisation are still uncompleted processes; it will take time before the new local administration with Atoll and Island Councils are completely established and the central Government assigns sufficient resources to implement the local development plans. With shortcomings present in Outcome 3 and in some outputs of Outcome 1 as well as in the management of co-financing which affected the budget available for the livelihood activities of Outcome 3, the satisfactory rating for overall results is a recognition of the various unintended results the project reached within a difficult operating environment. The country has a record of failed projects most of which have been impacted by the disruption of the tsunami and the political turmoil; however not all had the capacity to approach the political challenges in a mature and patient way so to produce the results recognised with proud by all stakeholders; in the words of respondents from the MEE, “before projects were mostly documents in a shelter, now we have something concrete and tangible from which to move forward”.

3.3.2 Relevance(*) and mainstreaming Rating: R

The analysis of documents and policies and the interviews with stakeholders confirm the AEC Project as highly relevant. As the Valuing biodiversity report quotes: “There are few examples in the world where an

entire nation's wellbeing is so strongly linked to its natural resources base. For such a country, any threat to its biodiversity means adverse impacts on its future development. Clearly then there is a strong imperative to recognise and demonstrate that there is an economic – in addition to a biological and ecological – rationale to biodiversity conservation”.

Identified prior to 2007, the Project was to generate substantial global benefits and was in line with the CBD guidelines and GEF OP2 Coastal, Marine, and Freshwater Ecosystems; its relevance is fully maintained under the current Biodiversity Strategy for GEF5. The project was perfectly in line with the Country Programme at the time of the identification and has kept relevance within the current UNDP 2011-2015 Country Programme; for UNDP it is both an ecosystem-based biodiversity conservation project and a sustainable development one. There is no other project of this nature being implemented in the country apart from the WB project which is complementary to the AEC for its waste management component.

Relevance to national priorities has been maintained throughout project development. The previous MPDN strived hard to formulate policies and projects to support conservation of atoll and island ecosystems; biodiversity issues are now integrated into the 7th National Development Plan (NDP) also envisaging activities for adaptation to climate change including conservation of ecosystems as one of the top environmental management priority. The Ministry of Environment hosted the Project and through EPA took the lead to implement the ecosystem approach in Baa Atoll. The key development aspect which shows both the relevance of the project and one of its main outcomes is that the entirety of Baa Atoll was declared a Biosphere Reserve in June 2011, following an extensive process of stakeholders and communities consultation. The high level political support is proved by the President of the Maldives announcing in Rio+20 the intention to have all the country as a BR. Ownership of the Project is high in all line-ministries considering that significant efforts are being made to manage the environment and conserve the country's exceptional marine and coastal biodiversity and mainstream it in a number of policies most of which have been updated as a consequence of the AEC Project advocacy. The following description serves the purpose of identifying both relevance as achievements in terms of mainstreaming:

- The Environment Protection and Preservation Act (Law 4/93), known as the Environmental Law, is the primary legal instrument for environmental management; it contains provisions for conservation of biological diversity, protected areas management, environmental impact assessment (EIA), waste management, and transboundary movement of hazardous substances; it needs urgent update; a draft supported by the AEC Project did not yet find the favour of Parliament's members; the need for advocacy is still there;
- The Fisheries Law (Law 5/1987) is a broad legal framework empowering MoFA to formulate and administer regulations to sustainably utilize and conserve oceanic fisheries, reef fisheries and all living marine resources, including the authority to protect species under threat and to establish conservation areas. The Law has been redrafted and sent to Parliament various times without being approved. Sections of the Law have been transformed into Regulations in 1997 and additional notifications and guidelines are utilized to provide guidance for the management of fisheries and marine resources. Specific destructive fishing practices are banned in the Maldives. Although bait fishing is allowed all over the country, the use of lights has been banned in the protected areas of Baa Atoll. A major result is that shark fishing has been banned since March 2011 and a few months later sharks were declared protected species. Biodiversity considerations are incorporated into the regulations for licensing of aquaculture;
- The Integrated Reef Resources Management Programme of the MRC provided methodologies for the sustainable use of marine biodiversity;
- The National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP, 2002) has been updated; its principles and outlines have basically been confirmed, emphasizing ecological sustainability, individual responsibility, equitable sharing of benefits, accountability of decision makers and public participation;
- NDP7 (2006-2010) has integrated biodiversity protection principles and acknowledges the dependence of the economy on coastal and marine resources. One of the twelve goals relates specifically to

conservation (“protect the natural environment and make people and property safer”); it includes targets for conserving the marine and coastal environment, improving solid waste management facilities in 75% of the islands, giving protected status to 5% of coral reefs, ensuring access to safe drinking water for all. The plan also recognizes the dependence of the economy on tourism as a challenge and outlines the policy of expanding into other areas. The NDP has been superseded by the Strategy Action Plan (SAP) 2009-2013 where environmental considerations feature high; in April 2009 the National Strategy for Sustainable Development was prepared including the goal for the country to achieve carbon neutrality by 2020; biological diversity conservation and integrated reef resources management is a priority action;

- Three National Environment Action Plans (NEAP) have been adopted (1990, 1999, 2009) explicitly recognizing as priorities sea level rise due to climate change; coastal zone management; biodiversity conservation; integrated reef resource management; integrated water resources management; and solid waste and sewage management;
- A strong commitment to the protection and conservation of the biodiversity is enshrined in the August 2008 Constitution: Clause 22 and article 67 highlight that the state, its citizens and visitors should respect, protect and conserve the biodiversity of the Maldives;
- the EIA Act was enacted in 1994; to face legal and regulatory framework weaknesses, EIA regulations were formulated in 2007 and updated in 2011 to strengthen the EIA process and ensure environmental and socio-economic impacts associated with new developments are accounted for in decision-making;
- Biodiversity considerations are incorporated into the National Adaptation Plan of Action (NAPA) on climate change (2007), in the agriculture sector’s policies and programmes and in the Forestry Policies;
- The 1995 Tourism Act provides the legal framework and Regulations on Protection and Conservation of the Environment. The Tourism Law (1979 and 1999) introduces more extensive environmental controls on resorts and coastal development including mandatory EIAs, to be implanted by the Ministry of Environment with support from the Tourism Advisory Board. MTAC has the authority to formulate and enforce regulations relating to tourism activities from sewage and solid waste disposal requirements for resorts to scuba diving; the issue of regulating development to reflect individual island carrying capacity is under active consideration. The third Tourism Master Plan includes biodiversity principles and recognizes the inextricable links between tourism and coastal and marine biodiversity, emphasizing the importance of developing tourism in harmony with nature. The Fourth Tourism Master Plan should be ready by the end of the year;
- Under the AEC Project 8 additional PAs were declared in Baa Atoll and the boundaries of the two existing ones were extended; the Hanifaru PA management plan has been recently gazetted and is already being implemented (the first one in the country); in Baa Atoll, draft management plans exist for another 5 areas and EPA confirms the intention to quickly proceed to finalize them through a participatory approach involving local communities;
- The Ministry of the Environment has issued a Solid Waste Management Strategy, which recognizes the lack of a national approach to solid waste management; a waste management plan does not yet exist and a WB project has been on-going for years but has not yet been implemented in the field. The current waste management system relies on collecting waste from tourist and a few inhabited islands and depositing them at a designated island; in many other inhabited islands it is not collected at all;
- Although climate change is recognized as the most important challenge for the country’s own survival due to sea level rises, a disaster management plan does not exist;
- The Maldives signed the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (1992), the CBD (1992), and the Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and other Matter (1995); it is also signatory of a number of other international environmental relevant conventions; those directly linked with biodiversity include: Cartagena Protocol on Bio-Safety, International Plant Protection Convention, Convention on the Law of the Sea. It is also part to the Mangrove for the Future Initiative;
- At local level the Decentralization Act empowers the newly elected Atoll and Island Councils; the system is new and it will take time to firmly establish; with the support of the AEC Project, a zonation system for Baa Atoll has been prepared and endorsed and a Baa Atoll Sustainable Development Plan prepared; Island Development Plans have been prepared for all inhabited islands of Baa Atoll and the process in

being initiated in other atolls' islands;

- The State of the Environment Report 2011 has been published.

Despite efforts and policy commitments, as the Valuing Biodiversity study identifies, there is still a lack of environmental integration across sectors and although increasing, biodiversity conservation is still accorded a minor priority in economic policy formulation, financial planning and implementation. According to the Valuing Biodiversity study, there are few economic incentives which encourage good environmental behaviour. Public investment in conservation remains extremely low (less than 1% of all public sector budget allocations) and also donors' assistance does not go beyond the 3% of environmental spending with relation to their total budget programmes. GEF/UNDP and the WB are the largest donors in the environment field.

3.3.3 Effectiveness and Efficiency (*)

Rating: Effectiveness: HS; Efficiency: S

The project cannot be evaluated as fully efficient but certainly highly effective given the peculiar characteristics of the operating environment. The December 2004 tsunami was the first reason for the postponement of the real start of project activities as recovery and reconstruction were the priorities. The various changes occurred in Government (elections took place either at national or local levels in 2008, 2009 and 2010) and the democratization and decentralization process which started in 2008 certainly slowed down implementation; in certain cases this was the result of deliberative adaptive management measures such as refraining from working in the field during pre-elections period to avoid an excessive interference of politics with technical implementation.

The Inception Phase (July 2005) was a lost occasion to clearly identify planning and management arrangements tools; the subsequent attempts to revise the Logframe (2006, 2007) did not prove successful until after the recruitment of AMA (2007) and a new PM (2007) and the recommendation of the MTE (2008) when the tool was finally revised and the Project put on track. Delays materialized also due to other implementing factors among others: i) turnovers in management (the PM, the NPD) at least until 2008; ii) an initial weak monitoring system which gradually improved starting from 2009; iii) inefficiencies in the mechanisms to recruit national and international consultants. However sound adaptive management measures and a careful administration of funds allowed the project to be extended twice without the need to increase the budget. The Project would have benefitted by building its exit-strategy in planning as early as possible; this was prepared in 2011 by AMA and has been under continuous revision.

While not fully efficient, the AEC Project has reached important results with relation to the three identified outcomes, although not all with the same degree of effectiveness. [Annex G](#) is a summary of achievements utilising the Logframe indicators. The following comments integrate the table and provide the informed observations of the Consultant, as obtained through interviews and visits. It should be noted that ***a mechanism for environmental conservation has been tested in the field; outstanding results are reached in Outcome 1 and Outcome 2, with significant unintended results among which the most important is that Project activities in developing Island and Atoll development plans constitute the first implementation step of the decentralisation process. The HS rating is meant to recognise this situation notwithstanding shortcomings in a few outputs of Outcomes 1 and Outcome 3.***

A photographic report ([Annex H](#)) illustrates some of the findings.

Outcome N.1 The ecosystem approach to conserving biodiversity is mainstreamed across sectoral institutions and policies nationally and on Baa Atoll

Rating: HS

The 2009 Biodiversity Valuation study provides decision-makers with data which ensure a precious basis to guide policy decisions; among others, it indicates that atoll ecosystems support at least 71% of national employment, 89% of GDP and 98% of exports in the Maldives. At Baa Atoll level, the document provides

key data for the local administration, for potential investors and for the all community to know the economic value of their resources. The study has been shared with national and local policy stakeholders; to exert its overall potential to influence conservation decisions, efforts must be done to summarise and disseminate it among non-technical people.

Following recommendations from the MTE, a common Vision and Strategy for Implementation was agreed and developed in 2009. The straightforwardness of the document made it a good tool to champion the country's vision about the ecosystem approach and the peculiar characteristics of Baa Atoll deserving conservation while at the same time addressing the stringent needs of the local population.

The Baa Atoll Sustainable Development Plan (BASDP) is considered a draft document for the administration which requests further technical assistance to finalise it; available only in Divehi, it has been elaborated based on extensive consultations, land use maps, resources maps and on the zonation system prepared with the AEC Project technical assistance and endorsed by the Atoll Council. The zonation system has adopted the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve criteria and protocols thus including core, buffer and transitional areas. Land use plans workshops were organised to enable all 13 inhabited islands to prepare their IDPs (available only in Divehi), many of which are already completed; all islands were surveyed and scale maps prepared. The ecosystem approach has been mainstreamed in the first atoll and islands development plans of the Maldives. This represents the very first implementing step of the on-going decentralisation process which started with the 2008 multi-party elections and the new Constitution; however needs are still extensive: decentralisation is a long process of capacity building and empowerment and requires adequate allocations of funds from the central budget to ensure the implementation of islands plans (at present, in most cases they are merely able to cover administrative costs).

The designation of the BR took place at the 23rd session of the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere (MAB-ICC) in June 2011 in Dresden Germany; it was officially announced only one year later, on the 5th of June 2012 (Environment Day) and inaugurated on the 13th June 2012 in the Maldives, eventually due to more stringent priorities of MEE. The process to obtain the designation of the BR by UNESCO implied engaging households, resorts and fishermen to commit to Charters for Sustainability and establish accreditation schemes for best practices. Meetings were held with most public and private stakeholders and 9 partnerships agreements have been signed with private partners; at households and fishermen level (fishermen associations do not exist) it proved unfeasible but the endorsement of the zonation system is considered as covering commitments. The designation of the BR responds to a clear interest from Government; it is a sign of decentralisation effectively happening and it represents an important achievement for the extensive consultations done with the communities and the value it has for the tourism industry as market opportunities can be further enhanced.

The BRO has been established in Eydhafushi, the capital of Baa Atoll, staffed with a Managing Director, a Conservation Officer, an Outreach Officer who at present also cover the position of Livelihood Officer plus one ranger which spend most of his time in Hanifaru PA. The MG has undergone three months induction course in EPA before being posted to Baa; the Outreach/Livelihood officer was the previous Atoll Coordinator and therefore the person with the most extensive experience. An International Capacity Building consultant is striving to provide technical assistance to the BR team (appointed for Nov./Dec. 2012) which appears to require capacity development in both technical and also basic managerial areas. The Atoll Council provides office space, electricity and a few other expenses while operational costs and staff are paid by the AEC Project until the end of December 2012, after which they will become civil servants; other positions have been established (higher management, finance, administration, IT, boat crew among others) but not yet appointed. A workplan for 2013 has been drafted. An Advisory Board has been appointed and its 1st meeting was held on 28 June 2012.

The AEC Project has been implemented over a long period of time during which many changes in government and line-ministries occurred. The ecosystem approach has been championed during this period, certainly with more effectiveness after 2009 when a straightforward vision was agreed among relevant stakeholders. Linkages among government departments responsible for economic development and environment are strengthened. The *contribution* of the AEC Project is undeniable although other factors may have had a stake in the revision of a number of policies and the integration of the ecosystem approach and principles of biodiversity conservation into national, sectoral and local plans and programmes: the NDP7 and the subsequent SAP 2009-2013, the Third Tourism Master Plan among others (see chapter on Relevance above for details); the Project supported the revision of the Environmental Law and the Fisheries Law (advocacy; a workshop is being organised for members of Parliament) but Parliament has yet not approved them. The number of PAs in Baa Atoll increased from 2 at project start to 10, plus the boundaries of the 2 existing ones which have been extended.

Achievements have the highest political support with the President of the Maldives having declared in Rio+20 the intention to have all the country declared a BR in five years time. To this end in June 2012 a national Conference was organised with 20 representatives from the different atolls with the objective of raising awareness about the general concept of the BR and explore lessons learnt from the actual process and the interest and feasibility to expand it to the entire country.

Outcome N.2 Model, innovative practices conserve biodiversity on Baa Atoll

Rating: HS

According to its original design, the AEC Project was to undertake a wide spectrum of ecological assessments to determine the value and presence of biodiversity at different moments in time. A quite unrealistic large number of international consultants and UN Volunteers positions were envisaged and subsequently cut down to a more manageable number. Ecological baseline assessments were thus undertaken including a reef evaluation study, manta-tow surveys, and a desk study on bird nesting and roosting sites in Baa Atoll; overall they led to the development of a habitat map for the establishment of a network of marine protected areas. The thesis of a student supported by the AEC Project on the WTP on coral reef through the contingent valuation method was an input to the preparation of the Biodiversity Economic Valuation study. A draft Marine Turtle Management Plan has been drafted. MRC collects data on fisheries catch and livelihood and undertakes coral reef monitoring; the last assessment was done in 2010 and since then there is no knowledge about biodiversity having increased/decreased or the health of the ecosystems. In future, data collected should be recorded into a national GIS to be hosted by the Ministry of Housing with sectoral ministries having a link according to interest and needs.

Based on the findings of the marine ecological assessments, the vision and implementation strategy and a the economic valuation work, in 2009 the **Baa Atoll Conservation Programme (BACP)** was elaborated for a period of five years to be the model system and implementing strategy for achieving biodiversity conservation in Baa Atoll. It identifies a portfolio of strategic actions (such as zoning, no take zones, PA, codes of practice, catch limits, education and training measures, enforcement) with the purpose of designing, testing and demonstrating a management system that will secure and sustain rich biodiversity and ecological processes for the benefit of future generations. Community awareness is increasing with the young generations being most receptive and fishermen opposing major resistance; conservation purposes are understood and resource users are asked to adhere to voluntary codes of practice to make activities more sustainable within the zoning system for sustainable use of the atoll (e.g. no anchoring in sensitive areas, no night fishing using powerful lights, no fishing of female lobsters, diving and snorkelling regulated); however enforcement needs to be strengthened. The idea is to further replicate this work throughout the Maldives. The BACP actions implemented so far relate to Hanifaru PA. BACP is now to be substituted by the BR management plan the preparation of which should start soon.

Of the 10 established PA, Hanifaru has the first management plan of the country, gazetted (April 2012) and under implementation; a MoU was signed between Baa Atoll Council and EPA to manage the area including ensuring the presence of trained rangers (one at the moment), the construction of the anchor blocks (done but without considering different boats weights), the need for tour guides to undertake a registration exam (48 participants in June 2012) and being certified. Access to Hanifaru requires payment: US\$10 for visitors of resorts/safari boats which signed the partnership agreement and financially contribute to the BACF (see below) and US\$20 for those who did not subscribe. BR staff undertakes daily registration of visitors and reports monthly to EPA. Private users purchase tickets in bulk and in advance either in Malé or from the Atoll Council; money collected through this system will return to the Fund. Access tokens are under preparation and are meant to further increase funding opportunities. Hanifaru represents a unique concentration of biodiversity which attracts tourists and local divers and snorkelers to observe the beautiful manta rays and sharks. The presence of many tourists, especially divers which disturbed the animals (manta rays and sharks), were the cause of conflicts among private users; stimulated by the presence of the Project, resorts owners put in place an auto-regulation mechanism to ban diving and night fishing; although difficult to control as safari boats were not part of the system, the situation started to improve; therefore the enforcement of the Hanifaru regulations are more than welcomed by most private users who show their willingness to collaborate with the BR. During interviews, most respondents highlighted the excellent service provided by the ranger but pointing to the fact that a single person with a rented boat is not sufficient to provide the service; the same Hanifaru Bay requires more than one person to be able to observe reasonable working hours; in addition as other PA's management plans will become operational, more rangers will be needed. There is the intention to at least have three rangers in place in the near future. The BRO reports indicate 286 visitors in July and 423 visitors in September 2012; major problems observed are linked with resources users, especially fishermen, visiting the area without observing the rules; usually upon the ranger explanations and/or provision of a written copy of the rules, the situation was controlled. 5 other draft management plans exists and should be finalised as soon as possible.

The AEC Project envisaged the need for a mechanism to ensure financial sustainability for the implementation of the BACP and subsequently of the BR. A **Baa Atoll Conservation Fund** was established as a Trust Fund (April 2012) under the MFT, with a separate account and an independent Board of Directors. It has been capitalised with an initial amount of about US\$340,000 composed of US\$250,000 from GEF (unspent Project funds); the first Government instalment of US\$50,000 (the first of 5 annual national contributions); Hanifaru access permits which in the first four months collected US\$34,000; US\$1,692 from the Hanifaru Tour Guides and annual quotas paid by diving centres and safari boats. In 2013 there will also be the annual quotas pledged through the 9 partnerships agreements signed with 3 resorts (Reethi Beech, Sonevafushi and Four Seasons), 3 dive centres, LAM and 1 Safari cruise. Resorts are required to pay an annual quota of US\$20,000; 4 additional resorts manifested the intention to sign the partnership agreement (including Royal Resort which expressed the difficulty to adhere for economic reasons but apparently has now confirmed). The last resort - Coco Beach - has not been interviewed but the reason for not adhering may lie on its far away location from Hanifaru. Additional resources should come from the selling of the three different types of conservation tokens envisaged and gadget promotional materials.

BACF is a mechanism from which project proposals will be identified, selected and implemented for the benefit of local communities; this a completely new and alternative experience to the very centralised usual system, empowering peoples decision-making. The functioning of the Trust Fund is regulated by a Memorandum and Articles and Rules of Operating Procedures; at present the AEC Project Manager acts as Managing Director until the end of December 2012; open calls to hire a MD are being organised but a qualified person, willing to live in Baa Atoll is proving extremely difficult to hire. While the salaries of the BR staff will be paid under the civil service from January 2013, operational costs will be paid through BACF; a first allocation of US\$100,000 has already been made for 2013; the process of identifying project ideas and selecting project proposals will start as soon as feasible and will involve extensive consultations with the communities. Most respondents pointed to the need to undertake an analysis of need before developing

activities. Evidently they are not aware of the strategy and livelihood programme already prepared. A multi-stakeholder Advisory Board has been created which already met for the first time (Nov. 2012).

Outcome N.3

Rating: S

Results under this outcome are less promising. A Livelihood Development Support Programme (LDSP) has been prepared based on a previous strategy identified by an international consultant discussing the potential for alternative sustainable livelihood mechanisms (such as mariculture, organic farming, local agricultural produce, handicrafts..). There is the need to ensure they are in line and integrated into IDPs and in the BASDP. The Island Council is the vehicle through which people express concerns and ideas for project proposals to be financed through the BACF. The Consultant could appreciate that councils and community members are aware of the BACF upcoming possibilities and ideas are already flowing: i.e. Malhoos: to undertake research on the quality of rain water collected through zinc roofs, or on soil erosion, a major island problem; Goidhoo: to develop agricultural activities; Ghoidoo and Dharavandoo to develop small tourist facilities. The new airport in Dharavandoo may further increase opportunities.

As per GEF regulations which do not allow GEF funds to be spent on livelihood support, activities undertaken under this outcome have been financed mainly through the UNDP trust funds and concern:

- the **Women Empowerment Project**, carried out by the MGF, targeted the most vulnerable women of Baa Atoll in 4 selected islands; 75 percent of the grant has been distributed to 4 target women groups for creating small business enterprises and training was provided for in general and financial management, marketing and purchasing. UNDP Trust Funds: US\$20,000 for a total project funds of US\$25,000.
- in the words of the Goidhoo Council members, the **Goidhoo Agriculture Project** to establish an orchard has been “on-going on papers” for years; MoFA has not been able to solve the issue of land clearing which requires the development of a management plan under EPA regulations. According to information collected on site, the Ministry would have informed that the cost of land clearing is higher than the funds available. The result is that the island is awaiting a decision and nothing is happening on site except: i) two years ago they received packages of fertilisers, ii) training was done to demonstrate model cooperatives functioning; iii) hydroponic cultivations were established. From MoFA the information has been collected that pilot activities could be started while a decision is taken; UNDP Trust Funds: US\$30,000.
- the educational component of the previously financed UNDP/MRC **Pearl Culture Project** to produce pearl jewellery and handicraft in Thulaadoo. According to information collected, it was a good project while in implementation but the process of handing over almost totally failed as the cooperative was evidently not ready to assume complete ownership;
- Funds were requested and provided to develop the ferry terminal in Eydhafushi; however in 2008 a new Government transport policy stopped the project which now has to be undertaken by the local administration according to Government requirements. The atoll administration is currently asking the possibility to utilise these funds for other activities (i.e. equipment purchase for the Eydhafushi hospital); provided these funds are spent for the benefit of the entire atoll, UNDP should be able to accord its agreement but the question is still under discussion.
- UNDP Trust funds were also used for the advocacy activities which successfully led to banning shark fishing and subsequently to declare sharks a protected species.

Overall the activities related with livelihood have not been substantial and the communities are willing to see what benefits they can get from the implementation of project proposals to be identified within the BACF. Particular attention should be given to ensure alternative livelihoods are provided to fishermen as fishing is the single most important economic activity after tourism and the regulations enforced in

Hanifar Bay (to ensure anchors do not break corals, powerful lights¹¹ are not used for night fishing, bait fishing is banned in core and buffer zones) are the cause of concerns for many fishermen, especially with relation to bait fishing which is practised by islanders able to easily reach Hanifar. There is the need to increase awareness, ensure behavioural changes and that regulations are respected as well as the need to find alternative livelihoods and a consensus on which areas are available for bait fishing and which are not.

3.3.3.1 Areas requiring attention

Gender Mainstreaming. The new local administration system maintains the WDC; however they have been elected only two weeks before writing this report. Previously WDCs have been invited to participate with a representative during workshops and seminars linked with the preparation of the zonation system, land use plans and the island development plans. Gender indicators were not identified in the revised Logframe and although gender mainstreaming was envisaged in the original project document, there is no evidence of the AEC Project being gender sensitive; specific activities are limited to the Women Development Project implemented through the MGF. During the interviews, women were not outspoken if in presence of Islands Council's male members; the situation changed dramatically if they were provided with the possibility to be interviewed by a woman and alone. Women confirmed to have knowledge of the BR existence and that all households received an informative letter from MEE; however they report that the concept of the BR is not clear to them and they wish to be better informed to be able to play a dissemination role with other people or their children. The Consultant believes that there is an urgent need to address the situation as women can play an important potential role in the conservation of the BR.

NGOs. A similar situation happens with NGOs. There are 28 NGOs in the atoll, 6 of which in Eydhafushi. Their work is incipient but discussions undertaken with representatives of a couple of NGOs confirmed that their potential role is not utilised. NGOs operates with limited funding, usually through sponsors and limited to a specific activity; although youth sports tend to be the main focus, increasing awareness of the environment and capacity building needs are driving their actions. Their role in promoting the BR is presently limited by the fact that this responsibility is given to the Island Council. The AEC Project only recently started to organise an NGO Forum of Friends of Baa Atoll; the Eydhafushi Club Combination is the first NGO of the country to have declared to be Friend of the BR and from next year they will reproduce the BR logo on their Facebook page. The Consultant believes that more emphasis could have been given to the potential role of NGO to make the Project more inclusive. In the next phases of the BR management plan implementation training and opportunities should be provided them to undertake conservation related activities as well as integrating the ecosystem approach into their own programmes.

Capacity development and training. A training plan was drafted in 2007 but a structured program of training and capacity development has not been implemented. This is considered a major weakness; in fact the entire project should have focused on capacity development. Some actions have been implemented such as i) a group of students was given the possibility to undertake master studies in India on alternative medicines, ii) activities started with the no longer existing Education Development Centre to develop a culture of sustainable island living and to review curricula for integrating biodiversity concepts for the Police Academy but they never resulted in anything susceptible to have a major impact, iii) schools were brought to visit diving centres; this is an activity which is systematically done by some of the resorts; iv) media training has been conducted with MTAC on environmental journalism. The involvement of people in seminars and workshops provided occasions for training but this was not systematic and overall these activities appear not integrated into a sustainable plan able to provide an answer to the evident lack of capacity everybody points to.

¹¹ Lights are reported to attract a large number of organisms, including tiny fish other than the intended which then die or are weakened by the time sufficient baitfish is collected.

Waste management. The collection and management of waste is the single major environmental problem of the country. Generally speaking combustible waste is incinerated and kitchen waste dumped offshore into the open sea in accordance with regulations. Waste which cannot be incinerated is transported by boat to the country's central dumpsite at Thilafushi. Waste management is generally better on resorts islands where best practices exist (e.g. the Eco-Centre in Sonevafushi Resort which provides for a modern, ecologically sound recycling of waste and waste disposal). The AEC Project undertook a study and a WTP survey but then it proved impossible to have a group of islands to agree to a plan; therefore it was decided more productive to link with the WB and leave the solution of the problem to the Maldives Environmental Management Project. However the stringent environmental regulations for impact assessments are delaying the WB project implementation and interviewed people appear in many cases to lose hope in a solution to be provided in a reasonable timing.

3.3.4 Country ownership

The AEC Project is nationally implemented through the Ministry of Environment. There is widespread recognition that its success highly depends on the strong and integrated participation of key line ministries, the private sector and the communities on Baa Atoll. The findings of the MTE that the ecosystem approach and the AEC Project were not sufficiently championed and communicated to stakeholders were appropriately addressed by first of all developing a Vision and Implementation Strategy to strengthen the integrated ownership of the different involved stakeholders:

Baa Atoll: a world class model of atoll ecosystem conservation where sustainable use supports a prosperous economy and a good quality of life for all, for ever – for replication across Maldives.

This new vision and push led to promote Baa Atoll as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve which became reality in June 2011. As it can be appreciated from the previous chapters, project advocacy and mainstreaming have involved sectoral ministries and local administrations, resulting in the revision of national and sectoral policies as well as in the elaboration of the Baa Atoll development plans and islands development plans; all these documents and plans integrate biodiversity and ecosystem management principles.

The presence of a BR in Baa Atoll and the international attention received are felt with proud by many interviewed stakeholders, including the local communities' members even when worries are expressed for the limitations this may have to their livelihood practices.

3.3.5 Sustainability (*)

Rating: ML

A new decentralised conservation model and strategy has been tested involving all stakeholders under a unique umbrella towards the search of win-win solutions. The model is ready for replication, key elements of sustainability are in place and chances that achievements can be maintained in the future are high. The AEC Project benefits from the highest political commitment coming from the President of the Maldives who has announced in Rio+20 the intention to have the entire country designated as a Biosphere Reserve in five years time. The feasibility of this idea is an element for discussion but certainly the support provided to the Baa Atoll BR is undeniable as can be appreciated by the intention of the Government to pass the current BR staff under the civil service by January 2013 and to strengthen substantially capacities in the near future; this commitment appears even more significant when considering that the Maldives are currently facing increasing pressure by the IMF to reduce its fiscal deficit.

Since 2009, EPA has been in the front-line playing a fundamental and widely recognised management and capacity building role in Baa. EPA has confirmed its commitment to continue providing assistance to the BRO in a decreasing way as far as the BR staff becomes able to manage the office and the reserve alone.

Financial sustainability should be ensured through the collection of money from visitors accessing Hanifaru and confidently other PAs in the near future, the selling of conservation tokens and gadgets/promotional material. In four months, access permits sold in Malè and Eydhafushi have generated US\$34,000. At the same time the firm involvement of the private tourism sector, the leading industry in the country and in Baa Atoll, should ensure sustainable finances to BACF through committed annual fees. The Project's projections indicate sustainable and increasing resources with a running capital of around US\$360,800 for 2012; US\$520,800 for 2013 and US\$692,000 for 2014. Apart from financing, the private sector has an additional role to play: general management as well as in certain cases environmental management expertise (e.g. biologists in dive centres, Sonevafushi Eco-Centre just to name a couple of them) can be instrumental to develop the BR team capacities; currently the Capacity Building Expert is exploring in-house expertise and the willingness of each participating entity to provide support.

On the other hand a certain number of issues may still cause instability and hamper sustainability and should be given proper attention:

- *The capacity issue remains the major problem*: the difficulty to retain capable and qualified people in the atoll is a fact as the long recruitment process with many unsuccessful calls for the MD of the BR proved. There are good technicians in the country but they are few in number and are mostly not attracted by the civil service remuneration and/or not willing to live in outer islands; when they do not emigrate, they tend to choose better internationally paid consultancies or search employment in the private sector. Clearly neither the BR nor the BACF can be managed without qualified personnel; both technical and managerial skills are required but certainly the managerial aspect appears the most urgent one. All BR team members require capacity building; the Capacity Building Expert has undertaken a needs assessment for the team as a whole and individually and drafted a capacity building plan; his assistance is instrumental but a two months inputs will not cover all needs especially considering that basic office management levels are lacking. The possible occurrence of staff turnover should also not be overlooked.
- *Roles and responsibility* of each intervening actor are not yet completely clear; different stakeholders (in the atoll council, island councils and resorts) reported of a communication gap and lack of feedback in the last months during which the transition from the AEC Project to the BR Office is taking place. It is still unclear which agency between MEE, EPA or the BR Office will take the lead in the overall management of the reserve; a not yet endorsed draft document on roles and responsibilities assigns EPA a central management role during the transition, to gradually decrease as capacity development will allow the BR team to take over management functions leaving EPA to its most appropriate regulatory role.
- *Awareness raising* is not a one-time activity and urgently need to be strengthened; interviews confirmed that local communities have general knowledge of the BR but are unable to understand deeply what it implies; there is a major, unexplored role to play for NGOs and for WDC in transferring knowledge and helping people understand and apply the basic concepts of environmental conservation.
- *The level of conflict* is minimal at the moment as the BR is almost identified with Hanifaru Bay, the only PA for which regulations are explicit and enforced; as more PAs comes under management, the level of conflict, especially with fishermen may arise.
- *The establishment of a Green Fund* probably based on taxes and levies is under discussion. Economic incentives for conservation, if properly designed, can raise revenues to be invested in biodiversity conservation as well as internalize biodiversity costs and benefits into private economic decisions by i) encouraging actors to engage in environmentally-friendly activities and ii) provide for equitable redistributive mechanisms to local communities as it happens with BACF. Should the Green Fund become reality, it is advisable to ensure that the two funds are distinguished: the implementation and

sustainability of BACF may be hampered as it is unlikely that the private sector and the communities could accept funds not to be exclusively directed to Baa Atoll.

- *Political volatility remains a factor: 2013 is another electoral year and the decentralisation process is still on-going.* It will take time before decentralisation is firmly established and policies are adapted. IDPs are being developed but islands are not assigned the required resources to implement their plans. Contradictions exist in the laws; as an illustrative example the Tourism Act provides for the determination of zones and islands for the development of tourism in the Maldives; islands can be leased for developing tourist resorts, agricultural or recreational activities. The Decentralization Act empowers the local administrations but Island Councils are not allowed to take the decision to eventually lease areas of their territories for development purposes. MTAC expresses the need for careful management of the resources considering that ensuring security and cleaning standards are leading factors in the tourism development decisions. Although the separation of inhabited islands from resorts islands is a key factor to reduce cultural impacts, local communities have a right to benefit from tourism beyond their being employed in resorts; the development of small handicraft shops and food facilities could be considered for bringing additional benefits to the communities.
- *Waste management* is the single most important hindrance to an effective BR; the AEC Project has declined to have a pro-active approach to contribute to its solution; waste is a problem in all islands, including Hanifaru island and often is thrown to the sea; there is a lot of expectation from the WB project but also deception that nothing has still happened in the field.
- *The extension of the BR concept to the entire country* sounds excessively optimistic; respondents from the President's Office confirm this objective although the modality through which it should take place and its financing are not clear. In fact careful fiscal and financial management is required and unless donor funding is sought, it is unlikely that this idea can materialise in five years; in addition the approach taken in Baa may not prove feasible in all atolls each one having its own cultural and economic characteristics: atolls less dependent on tourism are likely to experience higher level of conflicts with fishermen and difficulties in obtaining sustainable finances from the private sector. On the other hand, enhancing awareness and capacities from the grassroots to higher levels (by revising curricula, training teachers, working with the media and with communities) is a time and resource consuming process. It should also be considered that should the idea materialise, Baa Atoll BR prestige could be diminished.
- *Enforcement mechanisms* need to be strengthened.

3.3.7 Impact

The effectiveness of the conservation of globally significant biodiversity in Baa Atoll cannot yet be fully appreciated; more time has to pass and ecological baseline assessments undertaken (there is no evidence that they will be done before EoP). Nonetheless, in addition to the achievements of the main outcomes, effects are already manifesting and there are various unintended results which provide hope for the future.

Maldives is recognized as one of the most vulnerable countries in the world in terms of climate change, sea level rise and coastal erosion and environmental governance remains a high priority on the Government agenda. The mainstreaming of biodiversity and of the ecosystem approach into sectoral and economic policy and planning steadily improved. The Biodiversity Valuation study provides an important contribution to increase the awareness of policy and decision-makers on the economic value of biodiversity in the country; it demonstrated direct and indirect values of biodiversity for the country as a whole and for Baa Atoll in particular. Although data accuracy suffers from the limitations (timing and resources) under which the study was undertaken, clear trends are observable with reference to Direct Value (calculated using the market price method for tourism and fisheries); Indirect Value including shoreline protection benefits of coral reef (using the replacement cost method as well as WTP of Maldivians for biodiversity conservation; and Existence Value including spiritual, cultural and aesthetic values using WTP of Maldivians and of

tourists (Contingent valuation method)¹². The study had important media coverage and represents a major tool to provide the justification to invest in biodiversity conservation. Yet, as the study points to, the prevailing focus of national policies remains on achieving economic growth and equitable income distribution; the ways in which economic and environmental policies and mechanisms can be harmonized to promote sustainability are not clear. A wide range of instruments has been developed to promote production, investment and trade in priority sectors of the Maldives economy, but there are no specific environmental incentives which can direct investments towards environmentally-friendly activities.

Although Project' advocacy for the revision of the Environmental Law and the Fisheries Law has not yet materialized in their approval, it is significant that Parliamentarians are becoming increasingly more acquainted with environmental issues; before the end of the Project in December 2012, a workshop will be held for members of Parliament to discuss environmental and biodiversity issues; this is the first activity of this kind ever organized with members of Parliament.

The BR is a new concept in the country and was meant to leave a lasting inheritance for Baa Atoll, integrating conservation and sustainable development supported by a mechanism for financial sustainability; more importantly:

- a completely new approach to decentralized environmental management at atoll level is firmly established in Government thinking and received the highest political support through the President of the Maldives; the approach has been tested and has the possibility for replication to other atolls; very significantly all islands are in the process of developing IDPs and it is reported that people from other atolls (i.e. South Ari Atoll) are asking a meeting to learn about the Hanifaru model;
- the President of the Maldives is committed to scale up the process at national level; this would make the Maldives the first country in the world to be totally included under a BR: although probably overly optimistic, such an inspiring idea would not have emerged, should the AEC Project not be in place;
- the AEC Project has been extremely successful in building a private-public partnership which has all the characteristics to be sustainable if careful monitoring and follow up is provided; it leaves a methodology of work which is recognised as a model for replication; the participatory approach, the mobilisation of the communities around the BR, the firm involvement of the private sector and a good inter-ministerial dialogue complement the marine ecological baseline assessments and the studies undertaken to demonstrate the economic value of biodiversity;
- in a cultural context where people are used to work individually, at family level, involving communities in collective thinking about the interlinkages between conservation and livelihood needs is an extremely important process; it is too early to assess the impact on behavioural changes towards conservation but the ground is prepared: if livelihood activities are suitably implemented and information flow continuous, trust will increase and there is no reason to doubt about the sustainability of the process; a

12

Direct Value at national level includes: biodiversity resources provide 71% of national employment; 49% of public revenue; 62% of foreign exchange; 98% of exports; 89% of GDP. Tourism employs 58% of the workforce, accounts for 29% of capital investment and contributes 67% of GDP. Fisheries generate processed products worth Rf 960 million in company sales, create 14,500 jobs, produce export earnings worth Rf 1.7 billion or 99% of all exports.

Direct Value for Baa Atoll economy yearly: biodiversity resources provide 47% of employment, 47% of wages, 51% of business earnings and occupy 61% of the population; 40% of households have members employed in tourism. 60% of households are engaged in biodiversity-based business. Fisheries generate processed products worth Rf 11 million in company sales.

Indirect and Existence Value: total artificial replacement cost of coral reefs by building seawalls around 195 inhabited islands of the Maldives ranges between Rf. 20–34 billion and between Rf. 1– 1.75 billion for Baa Atoll 13 inhabited islands. Rf. 2 million per year for regulating/supporting services (indirect values) from Maldivian WTP; Rf. 1.8 million per year existence values from Maldivian WTP; Rf. 230 million existence value from global overseas WTP; Rf. 0.14 million annual indirect value and Rf. 0.05 million annual existence value for Baa Atoll residents; Rf. 20.02 million annual existence value for tourists visiting Baa resorts.

Source: Valuing Biodiversity, The Economic case for biodiversity conservation in the Maldives, 2009, IUCN for AEC Project

sense of ownership is emerging with many persons realising the importance of what has been achieved and being proud of the international attention that Baa Atoll attracted;

- under the Project, 8 PAs have been declared and the boundaries of the 2 existing ones have been extended; the first PA management plan (Hanifaru, the most important biodiversity spot of the Maldives with an internationally recognized global value) of the country has been gazetted and is implemented with regulations enforced; effects are visible: a reduced level of conflict among users visiting Hanifaru is evident and many respondents indicated that an increase in the number of animals, especially mantas, has been observed. Data are clearly empirical but they still provide an indication of trends.

Intended and non-intended positive effects should not overlook that much still remains to be done and that the declaration of a Biosphere Reserve may remain a label if not translated into effective management; this is not an arrival but instead a point of departure which requires to be sustained and strengthened. Community awareness over the need to protect the environment and natural resources has steadily increased but for an impact to be visible, this should be a continued activity; it is a long-term objective which takes time and requires to be addressed from the grassroots level. There is an urgent need to undertake demonstration activities through the livelihood programs to ensure people are onboard and trust is built; information need to be provided nationwide as fishermen in Baa Atoll come from different atolls and there are no restrictions for anyone to go fishing in any part of the country.

4. CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS & LESSONS

Interviews conducted for this TE confirm that stakeholders largely recognise the dependence of the Maldivian economy from biological resources and natural ecosystems and therefore the need to integrate them into economic policies, strategies and budgets to ensure sustained and equitable economic growth. The importance of the achievements of the AEC Project towards this objective is prevalent in the opinion of relevant actors both at national and Baa Atoll level.

In the Consultant's opinion, the declaration of Baa Atoll as a Biosphere Reserve is certainly the most visible result but not necessarily the most important. A decentralised environmental management model built on baseline ecological assessments, economic valuation of natural resources and an effective public-private partnership has been tested in the field; it supports the decentralisation process the country is undergoing and it is regarded as a sound model for conservation to be sustained and replicated.

The process is firmly established in policy and government thinking. The elaboration and dissemination of the Valuing Biodiversity Study is changing the main stakeholders approach to conservation according biodiversity more importance in economic decision making through demonstrating its undeniable contribution to the Maldives' economy.

The constructive private-public partnership reached has all the characteristics to be sustainable if careful monitoring and follow up is provided. The BR concept is sponsored as an instrument to benefit local communities and sustain their livelihoods as well as a tool to further develop the tourism industry but in an environmentally sustainable way. The very possibility that a financial mechanism exists to sustain livelihoods and directly benefit local communities is regarded as a major achievement, the first of this kind in the country's history.

Yet there is the need to recognize that this is not the arrival point but instead the base from which to move forward towards sustainable management and replication. The need for continuous awareness is evidenced by all stakeholders as well as the need to improve communication at different levels and establish clear roles and responsibilities. With varying degrees of acceptance, the idea of extending the BR to all the country appears interesting to maintain a focused interest on conservation but overly ambitious; in any case it would require careful analysis and a phased approach.

Various lessons can already be drawn from the process which is firmly established in policy and government thinking; a number of recommendations are here below provided to ensure sustainable management and replication; those written in blue should be applied before the end of Project.

4.1 Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Invest in Capacity development at BR Office, other atolls and central levels.

Responsibility: MEE, EPA

Timeframe for decision: Urgent for the BR Office

The AEC Project has not focused enough on capacity building notwithstanding the fact that the capacity issue is the subject of all conversations. An important investment in capacity development needs to be done at different levels:

BRO: staff is new and requires both management and technical skills; the two months input of the Capacity Builder will not exhaust needs; it is recommended to: i) take full advantage of existing capacity building possibilities (general organisation and environmental management) that resorts/diving centres can offer as confirmed during the interviews for this TE but ensure this is done under MEE/EPA leadership; ii) ensure BRO is provided with the basic means to operate: hire the two additional envisaged rangers, provide the necessary number of boats (currently they are operating with only one rented boat) and consider handing over the AEC Project speed boat; iii) ensure EPA support is maintained: ideally an EPA staff should be seconded to the BRO for a sufficient period of time;

in other atolls: for replication purposes and to sustain the decentralization process;

at central level: although not recognized as urgent, capacities need to be strengthened also in line-ministries to ensure adaptive management and full application and replication of the decentralised environmental management model. With the new electoral period approaching, this is even more evident. It is recommended that the Government: i) develops clear guidelines and codes of practice for integrating biodiversity into sectoral policies and programmes; ii) proceed to the revision of the Environmental and Fisheries Law; iii) orient policy/regulatory mechanisms towards the provision of additional incentives to support conservation and ecosystem/biodiversity management; iv) strengthen enforcement mechanisms.

Recommendation 2: Sustain the private-public relationship and implement livelihood activities in the field.

Responsibility: MEE, EPA, BRO

Timeframe for decision: Urgent

The AEC Project has been extremely successful in building partnerships and raising enthusiasm; the private sector embraced the Project's objectives and communities generally adhere to the BR concept; however this may quickly be reversed if the management of the Reserve does not prove effective: the private sector has very different ways of working and getting things done; on the other hand communities have long expected tangible results for livelihood activities; these need to be urgently shown in the field to ensure momentum is not lost through a smooth and quick implementation of BACF activities.

Recommendation 3: Invest in awareness and in communicating the interlinkages between conservation and development objectives.

Responsibility: MEE, EPA, BRO

Timeframe for decision: Urgent

Awareness raising about the importance of observing the rules and regulations established or to be established in the BR and protected areas' management plans must be a continuous activity which utilizes different means targeted to different audiences. Ideally curricula revision should be undertaken to provide for environmental and biodiversity teaching material; additional targeted tools can be utilized, among others: i) strips and comics for kids in schools but also for adults at community level; ii) frequent meetings between the Atoll Council/Island Councils with the BR staff to revert the current gap in communication; iii) a simple version of the Valuing Biodiversity Study for dissemination to local administration staff, local communities, schools: islanders must know the value of the natural resources and the fragility of the environment on which they live; iv) NGOs and WDC should be given the opportunity to play a role in raising and maintaining awareness as they can be instrumental for the BR sustainability.

Recommendation 4: Quality Monitoring and Financial Monitoring for the management of BACF.

Responsibility: MEE, EPA, MFT

Timeframe for decision: Urgent for the BACF

Monitoring mechanisms should be ensured and structured at various level: i) to financially monitor BACF: the Department of Planning/MFT informed that all its staff is undergoing results-based management training but that skilled personnel should be assigned to the careful management of the new trust fund; ii) to monitor the quality of implementation of the future livelihood projects under BACF: discussions are on-going to build on UNDP experience with the GEF Small Grants Programme and the Mangrove for the

Future. The system should be simple but effective; a final report on achievements will not suffice as implementation of the proposals should be constantly monitored; a mechanism for beneficiaries to control on each other should be found; this may prove particularly beneficial to control fishermen's activities.

UNDP attention is drawn on the management of unspent Truc Funds (left balances from the Women Development Project, the Goidhoo Agricultural Project and the previously envisaged ferry terminal in Eydhafushi): it should be ensured these funds are spent for the envisaged purpose or be given a different destination (i.e. be integrated in the BACF) to allow UNDP to close its accounts.

Recommendation 5: Complete the management plans for the other PA of the BR.

Responsibility: EPA

Timeframe for decision: As soon as possible

Many users currently identify the BR with Hanifaru PA; the current low degree of conflict among fishermen or the fact that Coco Resort did not sign the partnership agreement probably because located too far from Hanifaru Bay seem to confirm this hypothesis. Draft management plans have been prepared for another 5 PA of the Reserve and should be completed as soon as possible and put under implementation. The level of conflict is likely to arise as more areas will be prohibited for certain fishing or recreational activities modalities. Conflict resolution mechanisms should be envisaged.

Recommendation 6: Climate change adaptive measure at atoll and islands level.

Responsibility: MEE, EPA, sectoral ministries

Timeframe for decision: as soon as feasible

Climate change challenges the country's own existence. The Consultant has difficulties in understanding the reasons for which this risk has been overlooked in planning without considering adaptive measures at least in the last period of island and atoll's planning; although at project start the concept was not as explicit as it is today, there has been many occasions during a decade of implementation to bring it to the attention of management and stakeholders. The development of the BR management plan shall consider climate change adaptive measures at atoll and islands level.

Recommendation 7: Extension of the BR concept to all the country.

Responsibility: PO, MEE, EPA, Line-ministries

Timeframe for decision: a phased approach

An extension of the BR to the entire country in five years time appears optimistic, although it has the positive effect of keeping national/international attention on the subject. Fiscal balance difficulties¹³ and the economic interests at stake, with a large number of households engaging in fisheries, may make the process harder than expected. The model is not immediately replicable as it is unlikely that less tourist dependent atolls may have the same opportunities to create sustainable private-public partnerships and generate sustainable financial resources. If the point is not to have a designation label but effective management, a network of PA covering the different atolls could be a more practical possibility. It is recommended that before up-scaling the BR at national level, i) sustainable tangible results are reached in Baa Atoll, ii) careful analysis is done of each atoll economic characteristics to identify possible sustainable elements, iii) proper consideration is given to the difficult and time-consuming process of constructing partnerships while at the same time producing scientific knowledge; iv) the awareness ground is prepared from the grassroots level by revising educational material and curricula, train teachers and work with the media sector; v) ensure that an eventual upscale do not jeopardize the visibility and prestige of the Baa Atoll BR; vi) ensure waste management is addressed: there cannot be a BR with the current waste situation.

Recommendation 8: Provide for a lessons learnt participatory exercise.

Responsibility: PO, MEE

Timeframe for decision: as soon as possible

¹³ Growth expectations for this year are not very optimistic and recently the IMF has suggested budgetary cuts.

A participatory exercise involving relevant national and local stakeholders, including representatives of the Baa communities should be made to identify the major lessons learnt from the process of applying the decentralised environmental management model to conserve biodiversity and build future management on strengths and opportunities. The exercise should prove useful for all stakeholders, considering that the capacity to go beyond daily management and provide for “pauses of reflection” on the significance of achievements reached was lacking during Project development. A knowledge sharing mechanism can utilise existing networks such as the Shark Network and the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network has envisaged in the original project design.

Recommendation 9: Provide additional donor support.

Responsibility: UNDP/GEF

Timeframe for decision: Urgent

The Consultant’s has collected positive information on the commitment of the various stakeholders to sustain the BR; notwithstanding the current fiscal balance difficulties, the Government’s position to enrol the BR staff under the civil service is a clear expression of interest. However the BR is as fragile as the corals it intends to protect; complete donor support withdrawal at this stage may jeopardize achievements and it is recommended that a supporting and supervisory role is maintained. UNDP and GEF appear open to provide some kind of assistance and supervision; the way in which this will be done is not yet decided but the upcoming Mid-Term Evaluation of UNDAF provides the occasion for assessing the way forward. Apparently a couple of years ago GEF had offered the possibility to scale up activities at national level but evidently the times were not yet mature and the Government seemed not interested in this possibility. Surely with the intention to replicate the project in other atolls and having the BR in all the country, today this offer would be regarded in a different way.

Recommendation 10: Undertake an ex-post evaluation.

Responsibility: UNDP/GEF

Timeframe for decision: within two years

An ex-post evaluation is suggested in a couple of years time to assess impact and future benefits generated by the implementation of the BACP or the new BR management plan and the functioning of BACF and the way in which portions of funding raised as a result of biodiversity resource use are allocated to directly finance local initiatives. The ex-post evaluation should be prepared in an appropriate way by at least providing for: i) the implementation of the envisaged monitoring surveys of atoll biodiversity and ecosystem health conditions which have not been done by the end of the Project; ii) the update of databases or the GIS if functioning; iii) the selection of a control group in another atoll.

4.2 Lessons learnt

Lesson N.1 An effective Inception Phase.

GEF projects identification is usually a quite long process; when activities start in the field, project design needs to be tailored to the evolving situation. A solid inception phase is of paramount importance to i) update planning and monitoring tools (Logframe and indicators) adapting them to new field conditions, ii) construct a solid baseline, iii) ensure implementation arrangements reflect feasible and inclusive mechanisms. This has been particularly challenging in the Maldives which have experienced a lot of political turmoil and fundamental changes in the administration. There has been the need for an Inception Phase in different moments considering that it has been possible to put the Project on track only after the MTE was conducted in 2008.

Lesson N.2 Adaptive Management and dedicated staff.

The AEC Project would not have succeeded without the effective adaptive management measures put in place by i) AMA, ii) the PM, iii) UNDP/GEF. The decision to stop activities in pre-election times has been the cause of additional delays but has proved particularly sound as avoided the Project to become politicised. UNDP/GEF flexibility to provide for two project extensions demonstrated to be the right decisions. Project achievements are an indication of the professional and dedicated guidance and partnership building efforts of both AMA and the PM which is confirmed through the conversations the Consultant held with involved partners. Wherever possible linking short-term consultants, especially international experts, to project long-term objectives would also prove useful instead of simple one-time inputs.

Lesson N.3 Sound monitoring, reporting and communication mechanisms.

The AEC Project has reached important results. But more could have been achieved especially in terms of awareness if the M&E system and the communication flow were more structured and constant. Monitoring needs to be more than a formality required by the client; it needs to be supportive of daily management and provide direction; it should produce data and information to be used to communicate with different stakeholders utilising different and appropriate means. Community awareness requires major activities such as the revision of curricula and basic education but also the provision of simple information about the BR, the economic value of biodiversity and the opportunities BACF may offer. The need for good, tailored information is evident also at policy level; ministries' representatives and technical staff should receive different types of information; PSC needs to be announced with time and documents provided in advance. Monitoring should also include "deep thinking moments" of reflection to identify lessons learnt and build on them. Last but not least, a careful monitoring of the co-financing would have offered larger opportunities to implement livelihood activities.

Lesson N.4 Linking the policy to the field work through effective public-private partnerships

The ability to show stakeholders the economic value of the biodiversity resources and that win-win solutions are possible for both conservation and livelihood purposes is the way forward to have actors on board from the policy (ministries, experts, members of Parliament) to the field (resorts, fishermen, communities, women, NGOs) level. The effectiveness of the mechanism will have to be evaluated in the future but there is widespread recognition that drawing from both scientific and local knowledge has enabled the establishment of a model for conservation which is replicable and sustainable. Although the BACF is not yet under implementation, it appears evident that trust and partnership can be built when policy work is accompanied by sustainable alternative livelihood opportunities for the communities living out of the resources which require protection. The role of the private sector is prevailing; it has a direct economic interest in maintaining healthy ecosystems; occasionally the provision of sustained support to the local communities and the BR is felt as a duty. Linkages with influential people, major stakeholders and those able to provide financial and also capacity building support are essential. On the other hand initiatives like the AEC Project would not succeed without the high level political backing received. The linkage of the policy to the field work through effective public-private partnership is to be considered "good practice".

Lesson N. 5 Sound built-in exit strategies.

Exit strategies should be built in projects as soon as possible during implementation; if properly done, they will provide guidance and a direction towards which to look. This is also valid for the smaller initiatives within a larger project. The activities implemented under Outcome 3 would have largely benefitted from the inclusion of exit strategies to possibly anticipate some of problems experienced; it is reported that the Pearl Culture Project showed positive results during implementation but failed during its handing over. There is limited experience with cooperatives in the country; culturally people are used to work as individual families and still mistrust exist both towards the council and among farmers or fishermen themselves (this is evident by the absence of fishermen associations).

Annex A – Terms of Reference

Annex B – Document consulted/available for consultation

Project documents

- Project Document – Atoll Ecosystem-Based Conservation of Globally Significant Biological Diversity in the Maldives' Baa Atoll, UNDP/GEF, 2004
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- AEC Project, Quarterly Progress Reports, 2005-2012 (as available)
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- Project Steering Committee Minutes (years 2006, 2007, 2011, 2012)
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- Annual Work plans, 2005-2012 (as available)
- Financial reports and Face Forms 2005-2012 (as available)
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Strategy and UNDP/GEF documents

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- Baa Atoll A UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve? Consultation document for high level stakeholders. An opportunity to share your views, April 2009
- Baa Atoll Conservation Programme, 5 year Strategy 2009-2013, March 2009

- Baa Atoll Land Survey Report, April 2007
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- Economic Valuation of Coral Reefs: A Case Study of the Costs and Benefits of Improved Management of Dhigali Haa, A Marine Protected Area in Baa Atoll, Maldives, thesis of Mizna Mohamed, University of Canterbury Christchurch, New Zealand, August 2007
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- AEC Project, Introductory workshop on marine protected areas- summary report
- AEC Newsletter Issue 01, October 2007
- Maldives Atoll Ecosystem Conservation Project, Economic Valuation Component, March 2008
- Olhughiri Island Integrated Management Plan, first draft for consultation, June 2008
- Plan of Management of Marine Turtles in Baa Atoll, Draft Report (no date)
- Rapid Marine Ecological Baseline Assessment of Island of Baa Atoll, La Mer Group (no date)
- Report on Willingness to Pay for Waste Management in Baa Atoll, Seam RC (no date)
- Review Report of Island Land Use Planning Training Workshop in Baa Atoll, August 2006
- Stakeholders Analysis Report, A. Haleem, February 2008
- Valuing Biodiversity, The economic case for biodiversity conservation in the Maldives, IUCN (April 2009)
- Our Vision and Implementation Strategy – Atoll Ecosystem Conservation Project, 2009
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- Management Plan for Nibiligaa Marine Protected Area, Baa Atoll, Draft Version May 2011
- Management Plan for Goidhoo Koaru Core Area Mangrove Management Plan, Baa Atoll, Draft Version May 2011
- Management Plan for Angafaru Marine Protected Area, Baa Atoll, Draft Version May 2011
- Livelihood Development Support Program, (no date, no author)

Annex C – Evaluation Questions

Evaluative Criteria Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
Relevance: How does the project relate to the main objectives of the GEF focal area, and to the environment and development priorities at the local, regional and national levels?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How did the project support the GEF biodiversity focal area and strategic priorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existence of a clear relationship between the project objectives and GEF biodiversity focal area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents GEF focal areas strategies and documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documents analyses GEF website Interviews with UNDP and project team
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How did the project support the environment and sustainable development objectives of the Maldives? What was the level of country participation in driving the project? What was the level of stakeholder participation in project design and implementation? What was the level of stakeholder ownership in implementation? How did the project take into account the national realities, both in terms of institutional and policy framework in its design and its implementation? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Degree to which the project supported national environmental objectives Degree of coherence between the project and national priorities, policies and strategies Appreciation from national stakeholders with respect to adequacy of project design and implementation to national realities and existing capacities Level of involvement of government officials and other partners in the project design and implementation process Coherence between needs expressed by national stakeholders and issues addressed by the project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents National policies and strategies Key project partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documents analyses Interviews with UNDP and project partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How did the project support the needs of relevant stakeholders? Has the implementation of the project been inclusive of all relevant stakeholders? Were local beneficiaries and stakeholders adequately involved in project design and implementation? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strength of the link between expected results from the project and the needs of relevant stakeholders Degree of involvement and inclusiveness of stakeholders in project design and implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project partners and stakeholders Project documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document analysis Interviews with relevant stakeholders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Were there logical linkages between expected results of the project (log frame) and the project design (in terms of project components, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of coherence between project expected results and project design internal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Key project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document analysis Key interviews

choice of partners, structure, delivery mechanism, scope, budget, use of resources etc)?	logic		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the GEF funding support activities and objectives not addressed by other donors? • How did GEF-funds help to fill gaps (or give additional stimulus) that were necessary? • Was there coordination and complementarity between donors? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Degree to which the project was coherent and complementary to donor funding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documents from other donor supported activities • Other donor representatives • Project documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documents analyses • Interviews with project partners and relevant stakeholders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the experience of the project provided relevant lessons for other future projects targeted at similar objectives? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Degree of relevance for future projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data collected throughout evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data analysis
Effectiveness: To what extent have the expected outcomes and objectives of the project been achieved?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the project been effective in achieving its expected outcomes? • In which ways Biodiversity is mainstreamed into sectoral institutions and policies? • Which model, innovative practices have been used to conserve biodiversity in Baa Atoll? • How stakeholders are piloting sustainable natural resources management and livelihood development practices in Baa Atoll? How is the Women Development Project managed and what are results? How is the Goidhoo Agricultural Project managed and what are results? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicators in project document results framework and Logframe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project documents • Project team and relevant stakeholders • Data reported in project annual and quarterly reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documents analysis • Interviews with project team • Interviews with relevant stakeholders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well were risks, assumptions and impact drivers managed? • What was the quality of risk mitigation strategies developed? Were these sufficient? • Are there clear strategies for risk mitigation related with long-term sustainability of the project? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completeness of identification of risks and assumptions • Quality of risk mitigations strategies developed and followed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project documents • UNDP, project team, and relevant stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document analysis • Interviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What lessons have been learned from the project regarding achievement of outcomes? • What changes could have been made (if any) to the design of the project in order to improve the achievement of the project's expected results? 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data collected throughout evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data analysis
Efficiency: Was the project implemented efficiently, in-line with international and national norms and standards?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was adaptive management used or needed to ensure efficient resource 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability and quality of financial and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project documents and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document analysis

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> use? To what level was the project logical framework and work plans and any changes made to them used as management tools during implementation? Were the accounting and financial systems in place adequate for project management and producing accurate and timely financial information? Were progress reports produced accurately, timely and responded to reporting requirements including adaptive management changes? Was project implementation as cost effective as originally proposed (planned vs. actual) Did the leveraging of funds (co-financing) happen as planned? Were financial resources utilized efficiently? Could financial resources have been used more efficiently? Was procurement carried out in a manner making efficient use of project resources? How was results-based management used during project implementation? 	<p>progress reports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timeliness and adequacy of reporting provided Level of discrepancy between planned and utilized financial expenditures Planned vs. actual funds leveraged Cost in view of results achieved compared to costs of similar projects from other organizations Adequacy of project choices in view of existing context, infrastructure and cost Quality of results-based management reporting (progress reporting, M&E) Occurrence of change in project design/ implementation approach (i.e. restructuring) when needed to improve project efficiency Cost associated with delivery mechanism and management structure compared to alternatives 	<p>evaluations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNDP Project team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of files and archives Key interviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent were partnerships/linkages between institutions/ organizations encouraged and supported? Which partnerships/linkages were facilitated, including public-private partnerships ? Which ones can be considered sustainable? What was the level of efficiency of cooperation and collaboration arrangements? Which methods were successful or not and why? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific activities conducted to support the development of cooperative arrangements between partners Examples of supported partnerships Evidence that particular partnerships/linkages will be sustained Types/quality of partnership cooperation methods utilized 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents and evaluations Project partners and relevant stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document analysis Interviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Was an appropriate balance struck between utilization of international expertise as well as local capacity? Did the project take into account local capacity in design and implementation of the project? Was there an effective collaboration between institutions responsible for implementing the project? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of expertise utilized from international experts compared to national experts Number/quality of analyses done to assess local capacity potential and absorptive capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents and evaluations UNDP Beneficiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document analysis Interviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What lessons can be learnt from the project regarding efficiency? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data collected throughout 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data analysis

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How could the project implementation have been carried out more efficiently (in terms of management structures and procedures, partnerships arrangements etc...)? • What changes could have been made (if any) to the project in order to improve its efficiency? 		evaluation	
Sustainability: To what extent are there financial, institutional, social-economic, and/or environmental risks to sustaining long-term project results?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were sustainability issues integrated into the design and implementation of the project? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence / quality of sustainability strategy • Evidence / quality of steps taken to ensure sustainability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project documents and evaluations • UNDP and project personnel and project partners • Beneficiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document analysis • Interviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the project adequately address financial and economic sustainability issues? • Are the recurrent costs after project completion sustainable? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level and source of future financial support to be provided to relevant sectors and activities after project ends • Evidence of commitments from international partners, governments or other stakeholders to financially support relevant sectors of activities after project ends • Level of recurrent costs after completion of project and funding sources for those recurrent costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project documents and evaluations • UNDP and project personnel and project partners • Beneficiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document analysis • Interviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were the results of efforts made during the project implementation period well assimilated by organizations and their internal systems and procedures? • Is there evidence that project partners will continue their activities beyond project support? • What degree is there of local ownership of initiatives and results? • Were laws, policies and frameworks addressed through the project, in order to address sustainability of key initiatives and reforms? • What is the level of political commitment to build on the results of the project? • Are there policies or practices in place that create perverse incentives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Degree to which project activities and results have been taken over by local counterparts or institutions/organizations • Level of financial support to be provided to relevant sectors and activities by in-country actors after project end • Efforts to support the development of relevant laws and policies • State of enforcement and law making capacity • Evidences of commitment by government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project documents and evaluations • UNDP and project personnel and project partners • Beneficiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document analysis • Interviews

that would negatively affect long-term benefits?	enactment of laws and resource allocation to priorities		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the project contribute to key building blocks for socio-economic sustainability? • Did the project contribute to local stakeholders' acceptance of effective conservation schemes? • Are there adequate market incentives to ensure sustained environmental and economic benefits achieved through the project? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Example of contributions to sustainable socioeconomic changes in support of national development goals and strategies • Examples of contributions to sustainable socioeconomic changes in support of the objectives of the UNCBD and other conventions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project documents and evaluations • UNDP, project personnel and project partners • Beneficiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews • Documentation review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there risks to the environmental benefits that were created or that are expected to occur? • Are there long-term environmental threats that have not been addressed by the project? • Have any new environmental threats emerged in the project's lifetime? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of potential threats • Assessment of unaddressed or emerging threats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project documents and evaluations • Risk assessments • Government documents or other external published information • UNDP, project personnel and project partners • Beneficiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews • Documentation review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the capacity in place at the national and local levels adequate to ensure sustainability of the results achieved? • Were the necessary related capacities for lawmaking and enforcement built? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elements in place in those different management functions, at the appropriate levels (national and local) in terms of adequate structures, strategies, systems, skills, incentives and interrelationships with other key actors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project documents • UNDP, project personnel and project partners • Beneficiaries • Capacity assessments available, if any 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews • Documentation review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were project activities and results replicated nationally and / or scaled up? • Was the project contribution to replication or scaling up actively or passively promoted? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number/quality of replicated initiatives • Number/quality of replicated innovative initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other donor programming documents • Beneficiaries • UNDP, project personnel and project partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document analysis • Interviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the main challenges that may hinder sustainability of the achievements of the project? • Have any of these been addressed through project management? • What could be the possible measures taken to contribute to the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenges in view of building blocks of sustainability • Recent changes which may present new challenges to sustainability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project documents and evaluations • Beneficiaries • UNDP, project personnel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document analysis • Interviews

sustainability of efforts achieved by the project?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education strategy and partnership with school, education institutions etc. 	and project partners	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which areas/arrangements under the project show the strongest potential for lasting long-term results? • What are the key challenges and obstacles to the sustainability of results of the project initiatives that must be directly and quickly addressed? • Are national decision-making institutions prepared to continue improving their strategy for effective biodiversity conservation? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data collected throughout evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data analysis
Impact: Are there indications that the project has contributed to, or enabled progress toward, reduced environmental stress and/or improved ecological status?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the project achieve its overall objective of “conservation of globally significant biological diversity in Baa Atoll”? • Was the conservation of the globally significant biodiversity of the target area successful? • What barriers remain to achieving long-term objectives, or what necessary steps remain to be taken by stakeholders to achieve sustained impacts and benefits? • Are there unanticipated results achieved or contributed to by the project? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change in capacity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) To pool/mobilize resources ii) For related policy making and strategic planning iii) For implementation of related laws and strategies through adequate institutional frameworks and their maintenance • Change in use and implementation of sustainable livelihoods • Change in the number and strength of barriers such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Knowledge about biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity resources, and economic incentives in these areas ii) Cross-institutional coordination and inter-sectoral dialogue iii) knowledge of biodiversity conservation and sustainable use practices by end users iv) Coordination of policy and legal instruments incorporating biodiversity conservation strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project documents • Key stakeholders • Monitoring data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documents analysis • Meetings with UNDP, project team and project partners • Interviews with project beneficiaries and other stakeholders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the impacts or likely impacts of the project? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) On the local environment; ii) On economic well-being; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide relevant specific examples of impacts at species, ecosystem or genetic levels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project documents • UNCDB documents • Key Stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data analysis • Interviews with key stakeholders

iii) On other socio-economic issues.		• Monitoring data	
• How can other ongoing projects and future initiatives build on the successes of this project and learn from its weaknesses in order to enhance the potential for impact.	•	• Data collected throughout evaluation	• Data analysis

Additional questions for UNDP/GEF

- What type of support UNDP provided to project implementation?
- Was Adaptive Management well applied to the project?
- How did you monitor project and guide project activities?
- What are the main achievements of the AEC project? How has the AEC Project contributed to influence policy and law making in the country? What are the main achievements?
- How effectively is the ecosystem approach applied?
- Is UNDP/GEF available to further sustain current achievements and not lose momentum considering recent developments in the project (the Biosphere Reserve among others)?
- How are relations with partners? Did co-financing materialize?
- Was climate change assessed as an important risk and the project proofed against it?
- What should still be strengthened to ensure the initiative does not fail?
- What are the main weaknesses that should be addressed to ensure sustainability of the initiative?
- What are the main lessons learnt from project implementation according to your experience? Did the GEF Regional Office support the project in knowledge sharing?

Additional questions for the PMU

- How has the AEC Project contributed to influence policy and law making in the country? What are the main achievements?
- What activities did you develop to ensure stakeholders participation at both national and local levels (government, non government, communities, resorts and the private sector in general? Were partnership builders effective in their tasks?
- How effectively is the ecosystem approach applied?
- Since project start what kind of development are appreciated in reviewing curricula to include environmental and biodiversity issues? Is the process successful? Have teachers been trained?

- Has the project developed a Communication Plan? How was implemented? How effective were awareness campaigns?
- Has the project developed a Training Plan? What activities were undertaken in terms of training and capacity building? Were they effective? Were both men and women involved? Are needs still present?
- How successful has been the process of developing the Baa Atoll Development Plan?
- How successful was the process of developing Island Development Plans?
- What activities are under way for addressing the waste management issue?
- How are relations with partners? Did co-financing materialize?
- There is any intention to extend these processes to other atolls and islands?
- The Baa Atoll Conservation Fund is established. Is the President's Decree, the Memorandum and Articles of Association established and adopted? How is it functioning? Do you expect it to be sustainable?
- Was climate change assessed as an important risk and the project proofed against it?

Additional questions for Government related interviews

- How has the AEC Project contributed to influence policy and law making in the country? What type of changes occurred in legislation? What are the main achievements? Were policies to strengthen the National Commission for the Protection of the Environment developed and implemented? The Environmental Protection Law has been updated?
- Do you have an effective mechanism in place to enforce existing rules and regulations for natural resource and biodiversity conservation? Has this mechanism improved since the AEC project is in place?
- Since project start what kind of development are appreciated in reviewing curricula to include environmental and biodiversity issues? Is the process successful? Have teachers been trained?
- How successful has been the process of developing the Baa Atoll Development Plan?
- How successful was the process of developing Island Development Plans?
- There is any intention to extend these processes to other atolls and islands?
- The Baa Atoll Conservation Fund is established. Is the President's Decree, the Memorandum and Articles of Association established and adopted? How is it functioning? Do you expect it to be sustainable?
- Is the Government available to further sustain current achievements and not lose momentum considering recent developments in the project (Biosphere Reserve among others)?
- What should still be strengthened to ensure the initiative does not fail?
- What are the main weaknesses that should be addressed to ensure sustainability of the initiative?
- What are the main lessons learnt from project implementation according to your experience?

Additional questions for resorts managers/staff

- In which way have you been involved in the AEC Project? When did involvement started?
- Are you committed to contribute to the Baa Atoll Conservation Fund (BACF)? In which way are you expecting to contribute?
- Is your position similar to that of other resorts?
- How conservation tokens will be used?
- What are key elements for this approach to be successful?
- Which are the weakest areas you may identify in the approach?
- How satisfied you are of the public-private partnership established, if any?
- What did you learn in the process and what would be your suggestions should this approach be applied in other atolls?

Annex D - Schedule, Itinerary and Institutions/People met: 17 Nov.– 02 Dec. 2012

Date	Tasks/Meetings	Location
13-16/11	Preparation	Home based
13/11	Skype interview with Dr. Mike Moser, AMA	Home based
17-18/11	Travel Florence-Malé	
18/11	Arrival in Malé	
18/11	UNDP Procurement and HR	UNDP
18/11	UNDP Security	UNDP
18/11	Mr. Inaz (UNDP ARR, Environment & Energy) Mr. Mihad Mohamed, Programme Manager Ms. Aminath Shooza, Project Officer, E&E	UNDP
19/11	Ms. Hudha Ahmed, former UNDP ARR E&E	UNDP
19/11	Mr. Andrew Cox, UNDP Res. Rep. Ms. Azusa Kubota, UNDP Deputy Res. Rep., Programs and Operations Manager	UNDP
19-20-21/11	Mr. Abdulla Shibau, AEC PMU, Project Manager Mr. Ismail Nassir, AEC PMU Financial Officer Ms. Hawwa Liuza, AEC PMU Administrative Officer	MEE
20/11	Mr. Hussain Sinan, Director, Marine Research Centre, Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture	MRC
20/11	Ms. Ilham Atho Mohamed, Environment Analyst Ms. Miruza Mohamed, Assistant Director, Ministry of Environment Energy (MEE)	MEE
20/11	Ms. Roberta Lossio, Mid-Term Evaluator GEF/UNDP ICC?? Project	MEE
20/11	Mr. Mohamed Hunaif, Under Secretary Policy Office, Mr. Mahmood Riyaz, Under Secretary Policy Office, President's Office (PO)	PO
20/11	Mr. Ibrahim Shabau, Deputy Director General Mr. Abdulla Nasser, Permanent Secretary Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture (MOFA)	MOFA
21/11	Ms. Mariyam Rifga, Environment Analyst, Environmental Protection Agency	MEE
21/11	Mr. Ahmed Saleem, Permanent Secretary, MEE – GEF Technical Focal Point	MEE
22/11	Travel to Baa atoll by speed boat	
22/11	Ms. Hawwa Fazeena, Managing Director	BRO

	Mr. Mohamed Shafiu, Outreach and Livelihood Officer Mr. Mohamed Shan, Conservation Officer Mr. Pere Tomàs-Vives Biosphere Reserve Office	
22/11	Maalhos Island Council Representatives including the President 2 Fishermen Group of Women 1 teacher	Maalhos
22/11	Eydhafushi Island Council representatives including the President	Eydhafushi
23/11	Report writing Sonevafushi Resort: management of resort and of the diving centre, CSR responsible	Eydhafushi Sonevafushi
24/11	Reethi Beach Resort: management of resort and of diving centre	Reethi Beach
24/11	Royal Resort: management	Royal Resort
25/11	Goidhoo Island Council representatives including the President Women Development Committee (4 representatives) Visit to Goidhoo agricultural project site Visit to the mangroves areas	Goidhoo
25/11	External visit to ... Protected Area	
25/11	Mabrook Nasser, NGO Club Combination, Friend of the Biosphere Reserve, Edydafushi	Eydhafushi
26/11	Dharavandhoo Island Council, 3 representatives including the vice-president	Dharavandoo
26/11	Mohamed Fathuhee, previous Island Chief; current chairman of NGO Dharavandoo Islanders Association; also member of the BACF Advisory Board	Dharavandoo
26/11	Ahmed Fareesh, BR Ranger	Dharavandoo
26/11	Visit to Hanifaru PA	Hanifaru
26/11	Visit to Hangafaru	Hangafaru
27/11	Atoll Council: 4 representatives including the President and the Vice-President	Eydhafushi
27/11	Women Development Committee (5 representatives)	Eydhafushi
28/11	Principal of Eydhafushi school	Eydhafushi
28/11	Arrival in Male'	
28/11	Abdullahi Majeed, Deputy Minister, MEE and AEC National Project Director	MEE
28/11	Ibrahim Naeem, Director General, Environmental Protection Agency	EPA

29/11	Mohamed Imad, Director General, Department of Planning/Ministry of Finance and Treasury (MFT)	MFT
29/11	Musa Zameen, Director General, Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture (MTAC)	MTAC
30/11	Sameer Karki, UNDP GEF Regional Technical Advisor	Skype conversation
30/11	Reporting	Malé
01/11	Debriefing with MEE and UNDP	MEE
02/11	Departure	

Annex E – AEC Project Logical Framework

	Objectives	Targets	Indicators	Baseline	Means of Verification	Risks / Assumptions
GOAL	Conservation of the globally significant biological diversity of the Maldives					
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Area and quality of priority habitats on Baa Atoll maintained or improved Populations of indicator and flagship species remain at current levels or increase 	<p>Area and quality of coral reefs on Baa Atoll</p> <p>number of sites with IUCN index >22 (decile method) or index > 9 (amplitude method)</p>	<p>Area:</p> <p>Quality:</p> <p>Awaiting advice from SeaMarc</p> <p>25 (decile method)</p> <p>26 (amplitude method)</p>	<p>Surveys</p> <p>Surveys</p>	<p>Baseline surveys are repeated at end of project</p> <p>Baseline surveys are repeated at end of project</p>
PURPOSE	To establish and mainstream a management system for integrated ecosystem conservation and sustainable development on Baa Atoll.					
OUTCOME 1	The ecosystem approach to conserving biodiversity is mainstreamed across sectoral institutions and policies nationally & on Baa Atoll					
Output 1.1	Atoll ecosystem conservation approach integrated across key sectors, policies and plans (nationally and on Baa atoll)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By end 2008, value of atoll ecosystems to the economy and society quantified and communicated (for Maldives and Baa Atoll). 	<p>Economic valuation report & 4 policy briefs</p> <p>2 Workshop presentations</p>	No assessment of ecosystem values	<p>Report & briefs</p> <p>Activity reports</p>	

	Objectives	Targets	Indicators	Baseline	Means of Verification	Risks / Assumptions
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By end 2009, common vision and joint strategy for atoll ecosystem conservation prepared (and adopted by Government by end 2010) by key governmental and non-governmental stakeholders 	Vision and Strategy for Atoll Ecosystem Conservation	No common Vision or Strategy exists	Government approval of the Vision and Strategy	Ability to communicate Ecosystem Approach effectively
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By end 2009 Baa Atoll Sustainable Development Plan and 13 Island Development Plans are adopted, with ecosystem approach mainstreamed 	Ecosystem Approach mainstreamed in BASDP and 13 IDPs	No BASDP or IDPs	Approval of BASDP and IDPs by Atoll authorities	Willingness to focus on sustainability as well as development
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By EoP, integrated and convergent national policy framework for atoll ecosystem conservation (4 eco-friendly policies added (NDP7, Tourism, Education, revision of Environment Act) 	Number of ecosystem-friendly policies added	Zero eco-friendly policies added at start of project	Project reports	Collaboration of key sectoral partners

	Objectives	Targets	Indicators	Baseline	Means of Verification	Risks / Assumptions
Output 1.2	A new culture of sustainable island living and atoll ecosystem conservation being demonstrated on Baa Atoll	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By end-2010 Baa Atoll is declared a world class UNESCO Biosphere Reserve 	Biosphere Reserve Declaration	No Biosphere Reserve	UNESCO Biosphere List	GoM and Baa Atoll communities willing to make designation
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By mid-2010 25% of Baa households sign charter for Sustainable Living By EoP, all schools have a programme in place to deliver a culture of sustainable island living By mid-2010, all resorts sign charter for sustainable tourism By mid 2010, 50% fishing boats sign charter for sustainable fishing 	Number of signed charters Number of schools with programme Number of signed charters Number of signed charters	Zero Zero Zero Zero	Signed charters received Programme documents Signed charters received Signed charters received	Willingness to emphasise sustainability
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By EoP, 3 model projects of island eco-development initiatives (e.g. waste management, sewerage 	Number of eco-friendly projects initiated	Zero	Project reports	Co-financing by relevant sectors

	Objectives	Targets	Indicators	Baseline	Means of Verification	Risks / Assumptions
		treatment, shoreline development, buildings, energy, organic farming)				
OUTCOME 2	Model, Innovative Practices Conserve Biodiversity on Baa Atoll					
Output 2.1	Baa Atoll Conservation Programme (BACP) established, including key strategic actions for integrated conservation and sustainable development (including management measures such as zoning, codes of practice, land use plans, no take zones, protected areas, enforcement of species legislation etc)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By end 2008, biodiversity baseline known and priority biodiversity issues identified 	Biodiversity baseline Strategic priorities	No biodiversity overview No list of priorities	BD baseline report Strategic priorities list	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By mid-2009, BACP designed including prioritised strategic actions , and key partners signed-up 	Signed BACP and strategic action plans	None	BACP	Partners willing to cooperate and co-financing by relevant sectors
Output 2.2	Baa Atoll Conservation Programme management system established and capacity developed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By end of 2009, management system in place (staffing, training, information management, M&E and partnerships development) 	Management system designed and operational	No BACP management system	Annual reports	Co-financing by relevant sectors

	Objectives	Targets	Indicators	Baseline	Means of Verification	Risks / Assumptions
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By mid-2010, sustainable financing mechanism devised for (a) BACP core management and (b) for program of strategic actions 	Finance needs and mechanism designed, sources identified/piloted and funding being applied	No sustainable financing	Annual reports	Co-financing by relevant sectors
Output 2.3	Implementation of Baa Atoll Conservation Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By mid-2010, top 3 priority strategic actions in each of the three “sectors” (tourism, fisheries, island development) being addressed by collaborating stakeholders 	Recorded implementation of priority actions	No strategic actions	Annual reports	Co-financing by relevant sectors
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By EoP, success is being demonstrated for 50% of priority strategic actions 	Recorded implementation of priority actions	No strategic actions	Annual reports	Co-financing by relevant sectors
OUTCOME 3	Stakeholders Pilot Sustainable Natural Resource Management & Livelihood Development Practices on Baa Atoll					
Output 3.1	Sustainable livelihood development strategies included in island and atoll development planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By end 2008, Island Development Plans include sustainable livelihood development strategies for all 13 inhabited islands 	Number of approved island development plans including sustainable livelihood development strategies	None	Island development plans	

	Objectives	Targets	Indicators	Baseline	Means of Verification	Risks / Assumptions
		on Baa Atoll				
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By mid-2009, Baa Atoll Sustainable Development Plan incorporates strategies for sustainable livelihoods development and support 	Baa Atoll Sustainable Development Plan livelihood strategy	Does not exist	BASDP	
Output 3.2	Livelihoods development support program established and capacity developed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By mid-2009, key strategic actions for livelihoods development support identified, prioritized and planned (collaboratively) for implementation 	Strategic action programme for livelihoods development	No programme	Annual report	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By end-2009, 3 priority livelihoods support actions being implemented (eg. options analysis, credit, business planning, employment centre, marketing, collectives) 	Number of livelihood support activities established	None	Annual report	Co-financing by relevant sectors
Output 3.3	Increased range of sustainable livelihood options available to Baa atoll community (eg. mariculture, handicrafts, agricultural produce, other)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By end 2010, 3 priority livelihood options have been piloted, and 	Number of livelihood options piloted	Zero	Annual reports	Co-financing by relevant sectors

	Objectives	Targets	Indicators	Baseline	Means of Verification	Risks / Assumptions
		sustainability assessments undertaken				
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By EoP, sustainability is being demonstrated in 2 pilot livelihood options 	Number of livelihood options demonstrating sustainability after EoP	Zero	Reports on pilot livelihood options	Co-financing by relevant sectors

Annex F – Rating Table

<p>Ratings for Outcomes, Effectiveness, Efficiency, M&E, I&E Execution</p> <p>6: Highly Satisfactory (HS): no shortcomings 5: Satisfactory (S): minor shortcomings 4: Moderately Satisfactory (MS) 3: Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU): significant shortcomings 2: Unsatisfactory (U): major problems 1: Highly Unsatisfactory (HU): severe problems</p>	<p>Sustainability ratings:</p> <p>4. Likely (L): negligible risks to sustainability 3. Moderately Likely (ML): moderate risks 2. Moderately Unlikely (MU): significant risks 1. Unlikely (U): severe risks</p>	<p>Relevance ratings</p> <p>2. Relevant (R) 1.. Not relevant (NR)</p> <p>Impact Ratings:</p> <p>3. Significant (S) 2. Minimal (M) 1. Negligible (N)</p>
<p><i>Additional ratings where relevant:</i> Not Applicable (N/A) Unable to Assess (U/A)</p>		

Annex G – Rating Table

Outcome/Output	Performance Indicator	Baseline	2012 EoP Status	TE comments	Rating
Outcome N.1 The ecosystem approach to conserving biodiversity is mainstreamed across sectoral institutions and policies nationally & on Baa Atoll					HS
Output N.1.1 Atoll ecosystem conservation approach integrated across key sectors, policies and plans (nationally and on Baa Atoll)	By end of 2008, value of atoll ecosystems to the economy and society quantified and communicated (nationally and on Baa Atoll)	No assessment of ecosystem values	-Valuing Biodiversity study published in 2009 and distributed -Workshops organized -BR promoted at national level and information /leaflet provided to all inhabited island households -public awareness through media	-An key element to inform decision making in place -Awareness activities requires to be continuous but a good degree reached	HS
	By end of 2009 common vision and joint strategy for atoll ecosystem conservation prepared (adopted by Gov. and non-gov. stakeholders by end of 2010)	No common vision or strategy exist	-A common vision and strategy defined and published in 2009 and adopted -Communication activities not always effective: only one number of the Newsletter; posters on protected birds distributed in schools and in police stations	-Communication activities should be improved but vision agreed and championed among stakeholders	HS
	By end of 2009 Baa Atoll Sustainable Development Plan and 13 Island Development Plans adopted, with ecosystem approach mainstreamed	No BASDP or IDPs	-BASDP prepared -Zonation system endorsed; resource maps prepared -Workshop and seminars for land use created awareness/capacities -IDPs prepared for the 13 inhabited islands, some of which already in a final form and adopted	-Outstanding; a demonstration of decentralisation happening	HS
	By EoP, integrated and convergent national policy framework for atoll ecosystem conservation (4 eco-friendly policies added- NDP7, Tourism, Education, revision of Environment Act)	Zero eco-friendly policies added at project start	-Biodiversity principles and/or ecosystem approach now integrated in national/sectoral policies (2008 Constitution; NDP7; SAP ; 3rd Tourism Master Plan...); -Efforts to approve the revised version of the Env. Law and the Fisheries Law not yet successful -PA increased in number, in Baa Atoll from 2 to 10 -Shark fishing banned in 2011 and sharks became a protected species	-Outstanding although much remains to be done	HS
Output 1.2 A new culture of sustainable island living and atoll ecosystem conservation being demonstrated on Baa Atoll	By end of 2010 Baa Atoll is declared a world class UNESCO Biosphere Reserve	No Biosphere Reserve	-BR designation June 2011 in Dresden; -Official launch in the Maldives June 2012 -BRO established in Eydhafushi	-Outstanding	HS
	By mid-2010 25% of Baa households sign charter of Sustainable Living	Zero	-Not feasible	-Covered by the endorsement of the zonation system	S
	By EoP schools have programme in place to deliver a culture of sustainable island living	Zero	-Not achieved; BR presented in various schools and meetings	-Would have required coordinated and effective action	MU
	By mid-2010 all resorts sign charter for sustainable tourism	Zero	-3 out of 8 resorts have signed partnerships agreements with commitment to pay \$20,000 annual	-very good achievement and effective support obtained by the key economic	HS

			contribution; 4 more appears willing to do it -1Safari Boat signed the agreement with a quota of.. -LAM signed the agreement with a quota of...	industry	
	By mid-2010, 50% fishing boats sign charter for sustainable fishing	Zero	-Not feasible	-Covered by the endorsement of the zonation system	MS
	By EoP 3 model projects of island eco-development initiatives (e.g. waste management, sewerage treatment, shoreline development, buildings, energy, organic farming)	Zero		-Waste management is being handled through the WB project -hydroponic started to be cultivated in Goidhoo	MS
Outcome 2 Model, Innovative Practices Conserve Biodiversity on Baa Atoll					
Output 2.1 BACP established , including key strategic actions for integrated conservation and sustainable development (including management measures such as zoning, codes of practice, land use plans, no take zones, PAs, enforcement of species legislation..)	By end of 2008 biodiversity baseline known and priority biodiversity issues identified	No biodiversity overview No list of priorities	-Ecological baseline assessment: habitat map, reef and manta-tow study done - Network of marine PA established; -Thesis on WTP for coral reef supported; -Marine Turtle Management Plan -Study on birds nesting and roosting sites	-control surveys required	HS
	By mid-2009 BACP designed including prioritized strategic actions and key partners signed up	None	-BACP prepared for 2009-2013 listing priority actions -Priority areas led to establishment of 10 PA (8 new and the 2 existing ones with extended boundaries) -Two PA with a draft management plan -Management Plan for Hanifaru PA approved and under implementation -5 additional PA have a draft management plan	-Outstanding; the first management plan of the country under implementation and regulations enforced	HS
Output 2.2 BACP management system established and capacity developed	By end of 2009, management system in place (staffing, training, information management, M&E and partnership development)	No BACP management system	-Staffing includes a MG, a Conservation Officer, an Outreach and Livelihood Officer and one ranger; additional 2 rangers to be hired -Staff to pass under the Civil Service in Jan. 2013; -EPA agreed to support	-Capacity building urgently required and sustained	S
	By mid-2010, sustainable financing mechanism devised for (a) BACP core management and (b) for program of strategic actions	No sustainable financing	-BACP created/ capitalized with initial US\$ 340,000 -BACP to pay operational costs of BACP and BR; staff to be paid under civil service -Private sector partners who signed partnerships agreements pledged annual quotas (see above) -Hanifaru access permits already generating revenue	-Outstanding; needs careful monitoring and urgent actions to be shown in the field to the benefit of communities; assessment of its functioning to be done at a later stage	HS
Output 2.3 Implementation of BACP	By mid-2010 top 3 priority strategic actions in each of the three "sectors" (tourism,	No strategic actions	-Hanifaru regulations being enforced: no anchoring, regulated visits (no more than 80 people at once, no diving), no night fishing with lights...	-Other areas to be put under regulation by completing management plans	S

	fisheries, island development) being addressed by collaborating stakeholders		-shark fishing nationally banned -Hanifaru access permits to be paid		
	By EoP success is being demonstrated for 50% of priority strategic actions		-Hanifaru regulations reduced conflict among resources users -Animals are reported to have increased in number	-implement other envisaged measures	S
Outcome N.3 Stakeholders pilot sustainable natural resources management & livelihood development practices on Baa Atoll					
Output 3.1 Sustainable Livelihood development strategies included in island and atoll development planning	By end of 2008 IDPs include sustainable livelihood development strategies for all 13 inhabited islands on Baa	None	-Livelihood Development Support Strategy prepared -IDPs include sustainable development measures	-Need to ensure activities identified under LDSP are in line with IDPs	S
	By mid-2009 BASDP incorporates strategies for sustainable livelihoods development and support	Does not exist	-BASDP include sustainable development measures	-Need to ensure activities identified under LDSP are in line with BASDP	S
Output 3.2 Livelihood development support program established and capacity developed	By-mid 2009 key strategic actions for livelihoods development support identified, prioritized and planned (collaboratively) for implementation	No programme	-Livelihood Development Support Programme prepared	-Need to ensure activities identified under LDSP are in line with BASDP and IDPs	
	By end-2009, 3 priority livelihood support actions being implemented (e.g. options analysis, credit, business planning, employment centre, marketing, collectives)	None	- Women Development Project implemented in 4 islands through MGF targeting poor women for supporting the development of small businesses	-Overall activities are not coordinated and completed -Ensure unspent funds are directed to the envisaged activities or are eventually redirected to BACF	MS
Output 3.3 Increased range of sustainable livelihood options available to Baa Atoll community (e.g. mariculture, handicrafts, agricultural produce, other..)	By end of 2010, 3 priority livelihood options piloted and sustainability assessments undertaken	Zero	-Educational component of the Pearl Culture Project -Goidhoo Agricultural Project: a few actions implemented but overall project not completed		
	By EoP sustainability is being demonstrated in 2 pilot livelihood options		-Not achieved		

Colour Coding: Green: completed, indicator shows successful achievement; Yellow: Indicator shows expected completion by the end of the project; Red: indicator shows poor achievement – unlikely to be completed by project closure.