**Terms of Reference**

**Formulation of National Development Plan (NDP)**

# Background

The Maldives is an upper middle-income country facing unique challenges of a small island developing state (SIDS). The economic activities as well as the mere existence of the country depend on its natural resources and environmental viability. Rapid pace of urbanization and ecosystem degradation increases the vulnerability to climate change impacts, underscoring the need for adoption of sustainable development practices; balancing social, economic, governance and environmental considerations. Moreover, with the population widely dispersed across small islands and the country's susceptibility to global developments, it is imperative to approach the process holistically, fully integrating local, regional, national, and international perspectives.

With its transition to a full-fledged democracy in 2008 and the introduction of a multi-party system in its political arena, the country’s national development plans have waned in prominence, replaced by manifestos of political parties. These manifestos, usually prepared by each political party or coalition group before a presidential election, list the pledges that the respective party intends to achieve during its administration. However, these documents focus on things that the party may deliver to the citizens once elected during the five-year presidential term, lacking details on how the government resources may be allocated to attain these goals and across what timelines they will be implemented. Hence, there is a great need for the Maldives to translate its political manifestos into national development plans articulating government’s economic, social and environmental priorities to achieve the long-term vision and development agenda, so that the country may realistically achieve its development goals on a sustainable trajectory.

The new administration taking over in late 2023, intends to bring a transformative paradigm shift to streamline and fortify the national development process. This entails establishing a 20-year National Development Plan bolstered by requisite legal framework. This plan is expected to lay out the framework on resource allocation for sectoral and regional development, address socio-economic challenges of the country, urban planning issues, particularly in the Male’ region together with resource management, with the overarching goal of fostering sustainable socio-economic growth in the long term.

*Responding to the climate challenge*

Maldives is among the world’s most climate vulnerable countries, in terms of increased frequency of disruptive weather events, coastal erosion, flooding, and rise in sea levels affecting its low-lying shorelines that provide livelihoods, critical infrastructure, and marine ecosystems. Climate change poses the single most important multi-sectoral threat to development.

Maldives’ rapid pace of urbanization and ecosystem degradation increase its vulnerability to climate change impacts. Over 80% of the total land area of Maldives does not exceed 1-meter mean sea level and the critical infrastructures are located within 100 meters of the Maldivian coastline, which includes 90% of all resort infrastructure, about 70% of all fisheries infrastructure, and more than 75% of communications infrastructure..

The future viability and development of the country depends on sustainably managing its natural resources and strengthening the environmental resilience of its socioeconomic development model. There is a need for sustainable development practices that balance social, economic, governance and environmental considerations. The Maldives’ widely dispersed population across small islands and its susceptibility to the slow onset of adverse climate events, fiscal challenges and global developments, long-term national development planning must be done in a holistic manner, integrating local, regional, and international perspectives.

Climate-resilient development planning paired with a robust climate financing strategy are therefore essential and required advancement and policy dialogues in the Maldives.

**20 Year Development Plan**

This plan will present strategies and actions with concrete results-based outcomes with clear policies and timelines to achieve the development objectives of the nation. This will also be the overarching guidance for national, regional and local level planning and investment decisions within the plan period.

A spatial and infrastructure plan will be developed to complement the national priorities. A core principle of these supplementary plans would be ensuring that these are climate-responsive, data-informed plans. Many non-climate related challenges (ie, housing and land) can only be effectively addressed if this is done within the context of a broader climate risk reduction planning process.

Given this scenario, the government seeks a team of experts from various aspects of development planning; urban, economic, social, environment and governance planning to formulate the National Development Plan of the Maldives, 2026-2045 (20 years). The experts will work closely with the Ministry of Housing, Land and Urban Development (MHLUD) who is assigned the mandate to formulate the country’s national development framework and plans. The experts will also work with other stakeholders including government agencies, civil society organizations, private sector entities, development partners and community representatives, to gather inputs for analysis to establish the plan. This plan is intended to complement existing policies and strategic documents, such as the Strategic Action Plan (2023-2028) currently in formulation and the National Urban Development Policy, among others. It will also be aligned with global policy frameworks such as the SDGs and other international commitments, and should incorporate a human rights-based, gender-responsive and an inclusive approach.

## Objective:

The primary objective of this assignment is to outline and develop a comprehensive National Development Plan that addresses key economic, social, environmental, urban development and governance priorities for the sustainable growth and prosperity of the Maldives over the next 20 years. The plan should include mechanisms for effective implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the NDP.

## Scope:

The scope encompasses all areas of development of the Republic of Maldives, including but not limited to areas such as infrastructure, education, healthcare, tourism, climate resilience, energy, fisheries, agriculture, water supply & sanitation, waste management, good governance, gender equality and inclusion, youth empowerment, poverty eradication, financial resilience or security, stability, institutional reforms, , and regional and international cooperation.

The consultant team will be responsible for the following:

* 1. Conducting a comprehensive review of existing national policies, strategies, and development plans.
  2. Engaging with key stakeholders, including government and state agencies, civil society, private sector, state owned enterprises, development partners and public, to gather inputs and ensure a participatory and collaborative approach to planning.
  3. Undertaking a thorough analysis of Maldives’ socio-economic context, including demographic trends, environmental challenges, economic performance, and institutional capacity.
  4. Identify the existing strengths and weaknesses within sectors, thereby identifying potential subindustries, and to project on which industries would possibly thrive towards the latter period of the 20 years.
  5. Identifying priority sectors such as tourism, fisheries, infrastructure, education, and healthcare, social and cross-cutting issues such as climate change, gender equality, youth empowerment, and social inclusion that require special attention in the NDP.
  6. Undertake a prioritization assessment of the identified strategies and actions for the sectors. Prioritization should be conducted for the 20-year planning period. Align the findings with long-term concepts such as regional development and development of the urban centres to project the findings towards the feasibility of regional development and urban centre development in terms of the overall capacity to undertake the development of these strategies in the long run.
  7. Develop a strategic investment plan using the prioritization, reflecting priority intervention areas and strategies for investments. The plan should feature a phased action approach (short, medium, and long term) accompanied with indicative cost for implementation.
  8. Developing a results-based framework with clear targets, indicators, timelines and monitoring mechanisms with a progress evaluation mechanism to track the implementation of the NDP.
  9. Develop a targeted capacity-building strategy aligned with the development plan. This strategy should stem from the capacity requirements identified during stakeholder consultations.
  10. Responsible for organizing and facilitating meetings with key stakeholders involved in the project or initiative.
  11. Undertake stakeholder discussion and validations workshops to get their feedback and consensus. The stakeholders should include, but not limited to; government and state agencies, civil society, private sector, state owned enterprises, development partners, financial institutions and the general public. List of stakeholders would be decided in collaboration with The Presidents’ Office and the MoHLUD.

# Deliverables:

The consultant or team will be expected to deliver the following key outputs:

* 1. Inception report outlining the revised methodology, work plan, and stakeholder engagement strategy. It should also highlight the potential risks and the mitigation measures to conduct the project.
  2. Initial stakeholders consultation report summarizing the main findings
  3. Review report of the Maldives’ socio-economic context, including demographic trends, environmental challenges, economic performance, and institutional capacity
  4. Draft report on establishing and prioritizing strategies for the NDP
  5. Second stakeholders consultation report
  6. Validation workshop for validation of the strategies and the workshop report
  7. First draft of the The National Development Plan (NDP) for the next 20 years with concrete results-based outcomes, clear policies, strategies, to achieve the development objectives of the Nation in the medium-term and long term, complementing the Strategic Action Plan (2023-2028) that is being formulated. It also should include a monitoring and evaluation framework of the NDP along with the proposed institutional and governance arrangements to lead and oversee the implementation of the NDP. A potential financial investment plan for the NDP.
  8. Second draft of NDP with stakeholders comments feedback incorporated
  9. Final draft of the NDP

# Duration:

The assignment must be completed within 12 months, allowing ample time for thorough stakeholder consultations, data analysis, and report writing.

# Reporting and Coordination:

* 1. The consultants shall provide monthly progress reports to The Presidents’s Office, MHLUD and when required, report to the committees established under the project. These reports should detail the activities undertaken, milestones achieved, challenges encountered, and next steps planned.
  2. The consultants shall actively participate in coordination meetings with The Presidents’ Office and MHLUD, and other stakeholders as required. These meetings may include work planning sessions, progress review meetings, and stakeholder consultations. Consultants should contribute inputs, provide updates on their respective areas of responsibility, and collaborate with other team members to ensure alignment and coherence in work implementation.
  3. The consultants shall review and update the work plan regularly to reflect changes in activities, timelines, and resource requirements. Work plan updates should be submitted to The Presidents’ Office and MHLUD for review and approval. Consultants should proactively identify any risks or challenges to project implementation and propose mitigation measures as needed.

# Implementation of the Planning Process:

A team of consultants will be involved in developing a National Development Plan for the Maldives spanning from 2026 to 2045, with the Economic Development Specialist leading the team. The team will be based in MHLUD and will work closely with the National Planning Department of the ministry. The team to include members:

1. Economic Development Specialist *(team leader)*
2. Social Planning Specialist
3. Environment and Climate Change Specialist
4. Governance Specialist
5. Spatial Planning Specialist

## Responsibilities of Consultants in Administrative Tasks and Logistics

**Meetings:**

* Organize and facilitate stakeholder engagement sessions, ensuring effective communication with all parties involved.
* Coordinate meeting schedules, venues, and resources required for successful interactions.
* Prepare agendas, presentations, and other materials necessary for productive discussions.
* Document meeting minutes and share with stakeholders and focal points in a timely manner.

**Event Management:**

* Collaborate with local partners or host organizations to organize workshops, seminars, and conferences associated with NDP formulation.
* Lead and execution of these meeting, workshops, seminars and conference under the guidance of MHLUD.
* Liaise with speakers, panelists, and attendees to guarantee their participation and satisfaction.

**Documentation and Reporting:**

* Maintain accurate records of project activities, progress, and challenges encountered during the consultation phase.
* Produce regular reports, summarizing key findings, recommendations, and next steps for decision-makers.
* Share updates and insights with relevant stakeholders through appropriate channels.
* To maintain the data and information gathered throughout the project.

## Consultant-specific (individual) tasks and minimum qualifications

**Economic Development Specialist (team leader)**

1. Will be responsible for overall lead, coordination, team management and delivery of NDP together with other relevant supporting documentation.
2. Lead the formulation of economic development strategies and policies aligned with the overall goals of the NDP.
3. Analyse trade patterns, market dynamics, international competitiveness, and develop trade promotion strategies using proper economic modelling, forecasting, and risk assessment.
4. Conduct comprehensive analysis of the Maldives' economy, including revenue generation, public expenditure, debt sustainability, fiscal policy, and macroeconomic stability. Identify ways to streamline them to support the national development agenda
5. Formulate a development and investment plan that identifies priority areas for investment, estimates funding requirements.
6. Coordinate relevant stakeholders to execute and monitor the NDP.
7. Develop the methodology to formulate the NDP.
8. Ensure that input from all relevant stakeholders is integrated into a comprehensive integration of all relevant sectors and provide a comprehensive framework for the NDP.
9. Ensure that the process of developing the NDP is consultative and inclusive.
10. Provide statistical evidence for policy formulation and evidence-based decision-making.
11. Identify the bottlenecks that contribute to inefficiencies in the conduct of economic activities in Maldives and provide policy recommendations on how to overcome such constraints in the NDP.
12. Design performance indicators and monitoring mechanisms to track progress towards economic development targets.
13. Ensure gender mainstreaming and inclusivity throughout the NDP.

***Minimum qualifications***

1. A masters degree in economics, development studies, macroeconomics or any other relevant field.
2. Experience in formulating national development plans or similar strategic documents (added advantage for development of NDPs in SIDS and in UMIC context).
3. Experience in sectors relevant to the Maldives such as tourism, fisheries, environment, and climate change adaptation.
4. A minimum of 10 years practical experience working in the area of economic development, experience in SIDs and UMIC will be an added advantage.
5. Proven track record of economic analysis, policy formulation, and strategy development initiatives.
6. Experience in project management, including planning, implementation, and monitoring projects.
7. Demonstrated strong leadership and coordination skills in similar assignments.
8. Familiarity with international best practices in development planning and sustainable development.
9. Strong communication skills in English, and ability to liaise with various stakeholders, including government agencies, other state agencies, civil society, private sector and public.

**Social Planning Specialist**

1. Conduct a desk review of all existing laws, policies and procedures relevant to social services and social protection sector.
2. Work in coordination with Ministry of Social and Family Development and other relevant Ministries in identifying key areas of focus and establishing social sector priorities for the NDP.
3. Assess the current social dynamics and issues in Maldives and identify ways to streamline them to support the national development agenda;
4. Provide technical support in reviewing social sector and provide practical policy recommendations on how to develop and integrate the social sector in the NDP.
5. Conduct an analysis of vulnerability data identified through established mechanisms and provide practical policy recommendations on how to address the issues faced by the most vulnerable groups in the national policies, projects and programs.
6. Liaise and coordinate with relevant Ministries to collect statistical evidence for policy formulation and evidence-based decision-making
7. Strong communication skills in English, and ability to liaise with various stakeholders, including government officials; other state agencies, civil society and private sector.
8. Build on the current Elderly Policy to reflect the needs of an ageing population for NDP, based on collected/available data and emerging trends.
9. Support the team lead in developing the performance indicators and monitoring mechanisms to track progress towards development targets.
10. Ensure gender mainstreaming and inclusivity throughout the designated chapters.

***Minimum qualifications***

1. A masters degree in social sciences, development studies or any other relevant field.
2. A minimum of 10 years practical experience working on national development, specializing in social sector;
3. Professional experience in conducting research and producing policy papers on socio-economic sector;
4. Knowledge of social planning frameworks, methodologies, and tools, and familiarity with international standards and best practices in social development, including human rights-based approaches and participatory methodologies.
5. Strong communication skills, and ability to liaise with various stakeholders, including government officials; other state agencies, civil society and private sector.
6. Experience in project management, including planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of social development projects.

**Environment and climate change Specialist**

1. Conduct comprehensive environmental assessments to understand the current environmental situation and vulnerability to climate change. This assessment should give a priority focus, but not limiting to the areas identified as the key development areas in the NDP.
2. Use climate projections and scenario analysis to assess future climate change impacts on key sectors and regions. Incorporate future climate projections into risk and vulnerability assessments to better understand potential climate-related challenges and opportunities. The most recent available scenarios of Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) should be used.
3. Analyse existing policies, regulations, and practices related to climate change resilience building
4. Identify key environmental and climate change challenges and opportunities relevant to formulation of the national development plan.
5. Provide technical expertise and guidance on integrating climate-proofing considerations into the National Development Plan, including sectoral and regional development strategies
6. Develop recommendations for policy reforms, institutional capacity building, and stakeholder engagement to support effective implementation of environmental and climate change initiatives
7. Input for policy formulation for conservation, restoration, and sustainable management of natural resources and minimize negative impact from other sectors.
8. Prioritize strategies and actions aimed at reducing emissions and promoting sustainability
9. Input to strengthen environmental governance mechanisms to ensure effective implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and standards.
10. Provide input for integrating climate change and environment considerations in other sectoral programs, projects and policies to mitigate climate and environmental impacts.
11. Develop strategies to improve waste management systems and reduce pollution from solid waste, wastewater, and hazardous chemicals.
12. Develop strategies to increase renewable energy and energy efficiency over the 20 year period. This should cover all the national emissions sectors such as, energy generation, transportation, Industrial Processes and Product Use (IPPU), waste generation.
13. Provide statistical evidence for policy formulation and evidence-based decision-making.
14. Input for recommendations to strengthen environmental data system in the country and propose relevant alternative data collection methods for policy formulation.
15. Establish monitoring and reporting systems to track environmental indicators, trends, and progress towards environmental goals and targets.
16. Support the team lead in developing the performance indicators and monitoring mechanisms to track progress towards development targets.
17. Ensure gender mainstreaming and inclusivity throughout the designated chapters.

***Minimum qualifications***

1. A masters degree in environmental science, environmental management, natural resource management, or related field.
2. A minimum of 10 years practical experience working on environmental management projects, experience in working with a SIDs will be an added advantage.
3. Professional experience in conducting research and producing policy papers on environmental and climate issues;
4. Proficiency in environmental impact assessment methodologies, tools, and regulations.
5. Familiarity with environmental governance frameworks, policies, and institutional arrangements.
6. Experience in project management, including planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of environmental projects.
7. Strong communication skills in English, and ability to liaise with various stakeholders, including government officials; other state agencies, civil society and private sector.
8. Knowledge and use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS), other spatial planning tools

**Governance Specialist**

1. Conduct an in-depth analysis of the current governing system of Maldives by reviewing and assessing current practices in the country with regard to all executive, local government and other arms of the state.
2. Provide practical policy recommendations on how to make the governance system more efficient, including access to services, human rights and fiscal impacts.
3. Provide a framework on the roles of the central government and local government in service provision, governance, municipal services, and management of resources.
4. Provide recommendations to ensure national security and sovereignty
5. Support the team lead in developing the performance indicators and monitoring mechanisms to track progress towards development targets.
6. Ensure gender mainstreaming and inclusivity throughout the designated chapters.

***Minimum qualifications***

1. A masters degree in social sciences or other relevant discipline, preferably with a specialization in governance
2. A minimum of 10 years practical experience in the field of governance, public administration, experience in working with a SIDs will be an added advantage.
3. Expertise in governance assessments, policy analysis, institutional reform.
4. Familiarity with governance principles, frameworks, international standards and best practices in governance, transparency, accountability, and rule of law.
5. Strong communication skills in English, and ability to liaise with various stakeholders, including government officials; other state agencies, civil society and private sector.
6. Experience working with UN agencies and international development agencies is an added advantage.
7. Support the team lead in developing the performance indicators and monitoring mechanisms to track progress towards development targets.
8. Ensure gender mainstreaming and inclusivity throughout the designated chapters.

**Spatial Planning Specialist**

1. Conduct spatial analysis to assess land use patterns, urban growth trends, and spatial development dynamics in the Maldives. Utilise latest technologies to analyse spatial data, develop maps, and visualise spatial relationships.
2. Identify areas where urgent land use plans must be made, and provide policy recommendations on how such plans can be made;
3. Conduct spatial analysis and mapping to identify suitable locations for major infrastructure projects and assess climate change, environmental and social impacts.
4. Identify the current urban planning issues in Maldives and identify ways to streamline them to support the national development agenda;
5. Develop spatial development strategies and plans to guide sustainable growth and development in the Maldives and identify priority areas.
6. Analyse existing challenges and bottlenecks and provide policy guidance and recommendations to bring in more efficacies.
7. Provide guidelines and frameworks to maximise the use of land and natural resources to achieve the desired socioeconomic dynamics of the country in a sustainable manner over the 20 year period.
8. Provide statistical evidence for policy formulation and evidence-based decision-making.
9. Provide recommendations to strengthen the data system for spatial and urban planning and propose relevant alternative data collection methods for policy formulation.
10. Support the team lead in developing the performance indicators and monitoring mechanisms to track progress towards development targets.
11. Ensure gender mainstreaming and inclusivity throughout the designated chapters.

***Minimum qualifications***

1. A masters degree in urban planning and design, development studies or development planning or other relevant field.
2. A minimum of 10 years practical experience working on urban issues in the context of national development; and expertise in SIDs countries will be an added advantage.
3. Strong communication skills in English, and ability to liaise with various stakeholders, including government officials; other state agencies, civil society and private sector.
4. In-depth knowledge and use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) or other spatial planning tools.

## Evaluation criteria:

1. A minimum of 10 year general experience
2. A minimum of 5 year Particular Experience in Formulation of Development Plan
3. Experience in working in Small Islands Developing State (SIDS)
4. Experience in Capacity Building
5. Availability of Key Experts

## Schedule of Payment:

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| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Stages of Work** | **Amount Payable** |
| 1 | Inception stage, Data Collection from Sector Technical Consultations | 40% of the contract amount |
| 2 | First Round of Stakeholder Consultations, Submission of First Draft of the Plan | 30% of the contract amount |
| 3 | Second Round of Stakeholder Consultations, Validation, Submission of Final Plan | 30% of the contract amount |