

# Ocean Country Partnership Programme



## Marine Protected Area Management Plan Training

Addu City, 17 September 2024, Maldives

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**Ocean Country Partnership Programme:**

The Ocean Country Partnership Programme (OCPP) is a bilateral technical assistance and capacity building programme that provides tailored support to countries to manage the marine environment more sustainably, including by strengthening marine science expertise, developing science-based policy and management tools and creating educational resources for coastal communities. The OCPP delivers work under three thematic areas: biodiversity, marine pollution, and sustainable seafood.

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# Acronyms

IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
MPA	Marine Protected Area
MCCEE	Ministry of Climate Change, Environment and Energy
OCP	Ocean Country Partnership Programme
OECM	Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measure
PAME	Protected Area Management Effectiveness
PCA	Protected and Conserved Area
Q&A	Questions and Answer

# 1. Introduction

This report provides an overview of the third Marine Protected Area Management Planning Training held under the Consultancy to Develop Marine Protected Areas management plans and training in the Maldives, covering key discussions, activities, and the outcomes of the training sessions.

The third Marine Protected Area Management Planning Training was conducted on the 17th of September 2024 at the Conference Hall of Addu City Council. The training was delivered by Island Wetlands and organized by the Ministry of Climate Change, Environment, and Energy (MoCCEE) in collaboration with the Ocean Country Partnership Programs (OCP). This program aimed to enhance the management and protection of marine ecosystems, specifically Marine Protected Areas in the Maldives.

The purpose of this training workshop was to empower Local Island Councils, NGOs and Community Stakeholders with the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively develop and implement management plans for Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). Given the exceptional biodiversity of the Maldives' marine ecosystems and their critical contribution to the national economy through tourism and fisheries, it is essential to ensure the sustainable conservation of these natural resources.

This training focused on enhancing understanding of two published documents: (i) the Maldives National Framework for Management of Protected and Conserved Areas, and (ii) Maldives National Management Plan Guidance for Protected and Conserved Areas and also to equip council members and community members with the practical expertise to develop and implement MPA Management Plans. Through this training, the aim was to foster a culture of marine stewardship, ensuring the long-term health and resilience of the Maldives' marine ecosystems, which are vital for the survival and prosperity of its island communities.

Main objectives of the training were to:

- improve understanding of MPA management within Addu City based around existing 4 MPAs;
- provide comprehensive training on the National PCA Management Framework and Guidance documents; and
- equip participants with the skills to develop effective MPA Management Plans.

To achieve the aforementioned objectives, the training specifically targeted four Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) that are legally designated in Addu City but currently face

challenges in active management and enforcement. The MPAs that were the focus of this training included:

1. British Loyalty Shipwreck
2. Kuda Kandu Channel
3. Maakandu Channel and Kandihera
4. Eydhigali Kilhi and Koatthey

These areas were prioritized due to these area being MPAs among the eight legally declared protected areas in Addu City.

## 1.1. Training Participants

The training was initially proposed for elected members of the city council, staff from various wards, and representatives from tourism stakeholders, dive centers, and NGOs. A total of 23 participants registered for the training, however, only 18 attended. The attendees represented a combination of stakeholders from different sectors. Notably, the former Mayor of Addu City Council, who was the driving force behind the establishment of marine protected areas and nature parks in Addu City participated in the training.

The participation of city council members and staff was crucial, given their direct involvement in the management of protected areas. Their role as custodians of the MPAs was emphasized throughout the training. Additionally, tourism stakeholders and dive centers brought insights into the use of marine resources and the impact of tourism activities on these ecosystems. NGOs added value by sharing experiences related to conservation efforts and advocacy.

While the diversity of participants was a strength, the lower-than-expected attendance highlighted the need for improved outreach and engagement strategies to ensure broader representation in future trainings. Notably, key stakeholders from the tourism sector – specifically representatives from resorts and guesthouses in Addu – were absent. The absence of a guesthouse representative, who did not attend, may have limited discussions on certain issues, particularly those concerning community engagement and sector-specific challenges in tourism.

The active involvement of those present allowed for productive exchanges of ideas, particularly around the legal and practical aspects of MPA management. This engagement underscores the importance of multi-stakeholder participation in effective MPA governance and the need to foster collaboration among various sectors for sustainable outcomes

A breakdown of participants by sectors is provided in Section 5.1 for further insights into the diverse representation in the training.

## **1.2. Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) in MPA Management Training**

In line with the Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) principles outlined in the Ocean Country Partnership Programme (OCP), the training for Marine Protected Area (MPA) management planning was designed to promote equitable participation. To ensure gender equity, participating organizations were encouraged to send an equal representation of men and women, with a particular emphasis on including women in decision-making roles. This approach aimed to address inequalities and provide opportunities for women and other marginalized groups to actively contribute to MPA management.

Inclusive invitations and communications were key to broadening participation. The invitations were crafted in accessible language and disseminated through channels that reached both men and women. Additionally, a WhatsApp group was established to facilitate communication and address any travel or venue-related emergencies. The training was scheduled at times that were convenient and safe for all participants, with the venue selected for its accessibility, ensuring that no group was disadvantaged.

During the training, participants were asked if they required any additional support to fully engage with the materials and activities. This commitment to inclusivity ensured that all attendees had equal access to resources and could actively participate, reinforcing the GESI framework's focus on providing equitable opportunities for all.

## **2. Opening Ceremony**

The opening ceremony of the training commenced on the 17th of September with participant registration from 8:30 to 9:00 AM. The official proceedings began at 9:00 AM with opening remarks from Ms. Aishath Farhath Ali from Island Wetlands, who provided a brief overview of the day's agenda and outlined the objectives of the training.

Following her, the Mayor of Addu City, Mr. Ali Nizar, addressed the participants, emphasizing the importance of effective management of existing protected areas and highlighting the challenges in securing adequate resources for MPA management. He also expressed his gratitude to the Ministry of Climate Change, Environment, and Energy for organizing such a valuable training. The opening ceremony concluded with group photos and a coffee/tea break at 9:30 AM.

### 3. Content and Delivery of the Training

The one-day training program, spanning a total of seven hours, was designed to provide participants with a thorough understanding of Marine Protected Area (MPA) management. The program featured a blend of presentations, discussions, and practical exercises, aimed at equipping attendees with the essential knowledge and skills for effective MPA design and management.

The training program in Addu City demonstrated a unique variation in delivery compared to the previous two training sessions, reflecting the community's advanced understanding of Marine Protected Area (MPA) management. The Addu community's familiarity with MPA concepts, stemming from prior conservation initiatives funded by donor agencies, the region's designation as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, and the presence of managed protected areas under the Addu Nature Park, established a strong foundation. Consequently, participants arrived with expectations that extended beyond basic MPA training. They were particularly interested in exploring ways to enhance existing MPAs, focusing on making them more financially and ecologically sustainable for their communities.

To address these needs, the training delivery was adjusted. More time was allocated to in-depth discussions, diverging from the initial focus on the drafting of management plan chapters. This shift enabled participants to engage in detailed dialogue, exchanging ideas on how to elevate their protected areas to meet ecological and financial goals. Despite this adjustment, the structured nature of the training was maintained, with key sessions covering legal frameworks, management planning, stakeholder engagement, and management strategies.

The practical component of the training, which involved drafting a management plan, remained a central part of the program. Participants applied theoretical concepts to real-world scenarios within their MPAs, fostering a collaborative atmosphere for sharing knowledge and experiences. Greater emphasis was placed on interactive discussions, allowing participants to tailor the training to their unique context and challenges.

A one-hour lunch break and two 10-minute coffee breaks were incorporated into the schedule to ensure participants remained engaged and refreshed throughout the day. The detailed outline of the training can be found in Appendix One of the report.

Below is an outline of the structure and content of the training:



## **Registration and Pre-Assessment**

The training day commenced with the registration of participants from 9:30 AM to 9:45 AM. This was immediately followed by a pre-assessment of the participants' knowledge on Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). The pre-assessment, conducted through an online questionnaire, aimed to evaluate the participants' understanding of MPA management and to identify their expectations from the training. The results of this assessment were displayed live on the screen, providing immediate insights into the participants' baseline knowledge.

## **Introduction to Marine Protected Areas**

This session provided an introduction to marine ecosystems, with a focus on local biodiversity in the Maldives. It emphasized the importance of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in preserving biodiversity and supporting local communities. Participants were introduced to the definition and significance of MPAs, followed by a discussion and Q&A session.

## **Legal and Policy Context**

The legal and policy frameworks governing protected areas in the Maldives were presented, covering relevant laws and regulations. The roles and responsibilities of local stakeholders in implementing and adhering to these frameworks were discussed, ensuring that participants understood their obligations under these legal structures.

## **Introduction to the National MPA Management Framework**

This session provided an overview of the National Framework for the Management of Protected and Conserved Areas in the Maldives. It covered the key components and objectives of the framework, highlighting the importance of effective management practices and the role of local stakeholders in MPA management. A Q&A session followed to address any uncertainties.

## **Management Planning and Zoning**

Participants were introduced to the concept of management planning for MPAs, including the purpose and key questions that a management plan should address. The session outlined the steps and processes involved in management planning, with a focus on zoning and resource management. A discussion and Q&A session followed to further explore the challenges and considerations in MPA management planning.

## **Management Plan Preparation**

This session delved into the comprehensive process of developing an MPA management plan, covering aspects such as data collection, stakeholder engagement, and community involvement. An interactive session allowed participants to engage in identifying resources and establishing a planning team. A case study analysis was also conducted to demonstrate effective stakeholder engagement strategies.

### **Writing a Management Plan – Part 1**

The first part of the session on writing a management plan focused on the key elements of a management plan, including site description and key values. Participants engaged in a breakout session to brainstorm and discuss the key facts about their selected MPA.

### **Writing a Management Plan – Part 2**

The session continued with the identification of constraints, opportunities, and threats, as well as governance structures and policies. A group activity allowed participants to identify key values and threats specific to their MPAs, fostering collaboration and deeper understanding.

### **Writing a Management Plan – Part 3**

The final part of the management plan writing session focused on setting a clear vision and management objectives. Participants developed management strategies and action plans, including the creation of SMART objectives. The session concluded with a group discussion on effective management strategies.

## **Steps for Effective Management Plan**

Participants were guided through the process of resource need assessment, identifying essential requirements for effective MPA management. This was followed by a presentation on market and destination assessment, which provided insights into evaluating tourism opportunities and understanding visitor willingness to pay. The session also addressed common challenges in MPA management.

## **Sustainable Financing**

This session focused on strategies for securing sustainable financing for MPA management. Participants were introduced to various funding sources and mechanisms, with examples and best practices from other regions in the Maldives.

## **Developing a Mock MPA Management Plan**

In this practical session, participants engaged in hands-on exercises to create a mock MPA management plan. A template of the management plan was shared with the participants to develop their management plan. The session included presentations and feedback, allowing participants to apply the knowledge gained throughout the training.

## **Training Delivery Methods**

The training was delivered through interactive presentations, group discussions, workshops, case studies, real-life examples, and practical exercises.

A Google Drive folder was created for all participants, containing essential resources to support their involvement in the workshop. The folder included copies of the presentation slides, a template for the mock management plan, maps of the Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), and the official gazette announcement for the declaration of the four MPAs. Additionally, each MPA group was provided with a printed A3-sized paper map of their respective MPA, which they used during the practical exercises.

The 18 participants were divided into four groups, with each group assigned the name of one of the MPAs. This arrangement facilitated focused discussions and practical exercises, enabling participants to apply the workshop materials directly to the specific MPA they were tasked with.

Evaluation and feedback sessions were integrated to ensure assessment of participant understanding.

## **Assessment and Certification:**

The training concluded with the presentation of certificates to participants by Addu City Councillor Mr Faizu Rahman. A post-training assessment was conducted to gather feedback on the participants' experiences and perceptions of the MPA management training. This assessment was aimed at identifying areas of strength and opportunities for improvement, rather than testing knowledge acquisition.

Participants provided valuable insights into which sessions they found most effective and engaging. Sessions on practical MPA management strategies and interactive sessions received particularly positive feedback. These were noted for their relevance and practical application.

## 4. Key Discussion and Observations

### 4.1. Legal Challenges in Protected Area Management

The participants identified several legal challenges in the management of protected areas (PAs), particularly emphasizing the role of local councils. As custodians of these areas, councils are the closest authorities to the PAs, and the responsibility for their management should rest with them rather than being centrally managed by the ministry. Once assigned, councils can proactively manage these areas to ensure effective conservation and protection. However, the participants highlighted specific legal obstacles that need to be addressed for successful PA management:

1. **Legal Framework and Traditional Practices:** Before the enactment of the Environmental Protection and Preservation Act (EPPA) 4/93, traditional community practices, such as the "varuvaa" system for the collection of wood, fallen coconuts, played a significant role in resource management. Participants noted that these traditional systems had established rules for the sustainable use of resources, which were effective around 50 years ago. The shift to modern legal frameworks has created a gap in aligning traditional knowledge with current management practices.
2. **Challenges in Wetland Management:** Specific challenges were noted in the cleaning and management of wetlands from excessive sediments. The need to consider traditional resource management methods, alongside modern legal requirements, was emphasized.
3. **Awareness and Commitment:**
  - **Lack of Awareness:** There is insufficient awareness within communities regarding existing laws and regulations related to protected areas. This lack of knowledge significantly hampers the enforcement of conservation measures.
  - **Commitment from Authorities:** Both the local councils and the central government need to demonstrate stronger commitment to providing the necessary resources for effective PA management. Without adequate support, councils struggle to implement management plans.
4. **Enforcement and Compliance:** Participants underscored the inadequacy of compliance and enforcement mechanisms, which are essential for effective PA management. There is a need for systems to be in place to ensure the proper enforcement of management plans, alongside appropriate monitoring and accountability mechanisms.

5. **Impact of Governmental Changes:** Frequent shifts in governmental priorities and practices following changes in leadership were highlighted as a challenge. The issuance of permits and central government control can often override the decisions of local councils, disrupting the continuity of PA management efforts.
6. **Land Use Decision-Making:** The Planning Ministry retains ultimate control over land use decisions, which limits the autonomy of local councils in managing PAs. Participants stressed the need for councils to have greater authority in land use planning, particularly for areas adjacent to protected zones.
7. **Legislative Support for the EPA:** The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) requires stronger legislative backing to effectively implement environmental laws. Participants noted that the EPA currently lacks sufficient power to prevent developmental projects that may be detrimental to the environment.
8. **Transplantation and Conservation Challenges:** Experiences shared by participants during reclamation projects revealed significant challenges in coral reef transplantation. For instance, during certain projects, work had to be delayed until marine life, such as turtles or baby sharks, had safely vacated their nests within coral reefs. This demonstrates the complex balance between development and conservation, as well as the need for more robust environmental safeguards when managing sensitive ecosystems

#### 4.1.1. Resource Use and Zoning

##### Koathey MPA

Koathey is a significant site used for sightseeing, tourism, picnics, and recreational activities. It features a snorkeling area and functions as a natural harbor. Surrounding Koathey are several dive areas, including the Tiger Shark dive point and Mangrove Bay. In addition to tourism, Koathey is also utilized for bait fishing, although there are ongoing issues with illegal natural resource extraction, such as sand mining and unregulated coconut extraction from the mangrove bay area.

On the western side of Koathey, near Farikede, fishing activities target species such as tuna, barracuda, wahoo, sailfish, rainbow runners, groupers, and snappers. The area is unique for its significantly lower sea surface temperature, compared to other parts of the Maldives, due to strong currents. As a result, Koathey is less affected by coral bleaching, providing a relatively healthy environment for marine biodiversity.

##### Koda Kanda MPA

Koda Kanda is one of the four key channels in Addu Atoll, noted for its cold current inflow from the Indian Ocean. This channel supports a variety of activities, including

transportation, fishing, and diving. Unlike some areas, sand mining and coral mining are not practiced in Koda Kanda, helping to preserve its ecosystem. The reef features a 40-metre drop-off, and turtles and barracuda are frequently seen in the area.

The Southern Hemisphere coral coverage is high, though fish populations are relatively lower. Fishing practices in the area include trawling, jigging, and other techniques. However, anchoring is rare due to the presence of delicate table coral formations. Snorkeling is also popular within the channel, although high currents pose challenges. On rough days, divers and snorkelers can be drifted up to 1,000 metres. With two newly reclaimed islands situated one mile away, the area faces the potential for congestion in the future.

Given its heavy use for multiple purposes, including bait fishing, transportation, and tourism, Koda Kanda is the most highly utilized marine area in Addu City. Concerns were raised regarding the need for zoning to ensure safety, particularly when divers are in the water. Specific zoning measures, such as permitting fishing at a safe distance from the reef, are recommended to mitigate conflicts. Snorkeling points, such as Turtle Hill and Maahal, are historically significant and remain popular among locals and visitors alike.

### **Addu Manta Point (Maakandu Channel)**

Addu Manta Point is a renowned dive site and cleaning station for manta rays, attracting visitors throughout the year. In addition to being a prime location for manta rays, the area also serves as a transportation channel for entering the atoll. Hawksbill turtles are abundant, and the presence of sponges contributes to the ecosystem's health. Napoleon wrasses of various ages are also found in the area.

Further south, the reef supports sea cucumber harvesting. The channel between Kandihera and Fathikede serves as a shallow nursery reef, used for both transportation and fishing. Dolphins can be seen crossing the channel every evening, drawing tourists for dolphin-watching excursions. Kandihera's eastern point is notable as a seabird roosting area, particularly for species such as noddies and terns (Gaadhooni). Seabird nesting activity is prominent, with seabirds continuing to nest in the area as recently as April of this year.

### **Challenges and Conflicts**

The main challenge identified in these areas is the lack of awareness among various stakeholders regarding sustainable resource use. With more than 20 safari boats visiting during peak seasons, conflicts between resource use, tourism, and conservation efforts are increasingly common. Improved awareness and zoning regulations are

necessary to address these conflicts and ensure the long-term sustainability of Addu's marine ecosystems

## 4.2. Site Descriptions and Key Values

### 4.2.1. Shipwreck

#### **Physical Features:**

The shipwreck is the oldest and largest in the Maldives, lying submerged for 81 years. Its sinking was achieved through explosives, and some sections of the structure have become weak over time. The ship rests at a depth of 15 m at its highest point, with the bottom reaching 31 m. Spanning a length of 132 m, it stands as a prominent underwater site.

#### **Biological Features:**

The wreck supports a rich variety of marine life, making it a popular dive site. Big table corals and soft corals cover the wreck, offering a habitat for numerous fish species, turtles, and small marine creatures. The biodiversity supported by this wreck includes a wide range of small fish as well as larger species, contributing to the site's ecological value.

#### **Cultural Features:**

The shipwreck holds significant historical importance, having been involved in attacks during World War II. The first attack occurred near Madagascar in 1942, followed by a second attack in Addu Atoll, where the ship eventually sank. This historical context adds cultural and heritage value to the site.

#### **Resource Use:**

The shipwreck is a renowned site for both technical and recreational diving, attracting a significant number of divers from across the world. The site is particularly favored by the diving community in Addu, drawing interest due to its historical significance and rich biodiversity.

#### **Key Values:**

- **Strength:** Regarded as one of the most beautiful dive sites in the Maldives, the wreck is home to a wide variety of marine life.
- **Opportunities:** The site offers the potential for enhanced tourism opportunities, particularly overnight dive trips, which could further develop Addu's tourism market.

- **Threats:** The primary threats include the possibility of oil leaks from the wreck, which could damage the surrounding marine environment, as well as structural deterioration of the wreck over time

### 4.3. Koatthey

#### **Physical Features:**

Koatthey encompasses a variety of landscapes, including a reef, mud flats, seagrass beds, mangrove bay, and beaches. These distinct ecosystems are interconnected and support a variety of flora and fauna, adding to the region's ecological significance.

#### **Biological Features:**

Koatthey is home to diverse marine species, including stingrays, turtles, sharks, and dolphins. The presence of these species enhances the area's biodiversity and makes it an important habitat for marine life. The seagrass beds and mangroves play a crucial role in supporting these species by providing nursery grounds and feeding areas.

#### **Cultural Features:**

The area holds historical and cultural importance as the oldest known residential area in Addu Atoll. Remnants of graveyards, tombs, and ruins from a bygone era can still be found in Koatthey. The local practice of naming babies with boats, known as "dhivvafengada," further enriches the cultural landscape. As a natural harbor, Koatthey has historically been an essential fishing ground for the local community.

#### **Resource Use:**

Koatthey is used for ecotourism, fishing, and community activities. Its natural harbor and beaches attract visitors, and it plays a role in supporting local livelihoods through fishing.

#### **Key Values:**

- **Strength:** Koatthey holds potential as an ecotourism destination due to its natural beauty, rich biodiversity, and cultural significance.
- **Weakness:** Budget constraints and limited funding pose challenges to fully utilizing Koatthey's potential and protecting its resources.
- **Opportunities:** The site offers opportunities for economic growth, job creation, and greater community engagement through sustainable ecotourism and conservation efforts.



- **Threats:** Illegal activities such as spear fishing, bird trapping, and unauthorized fishing practices, along with broader environmental threats like climate change and coral bleaching, threaten the integrity of the ecosystem.

## 4.4. Immediate needs

British Loyalty, recognized as the most beautiful wreck dive in the Maldives, requires a focused marketing effort to enhance its visibility and attract more visitors. Immediate repair of the currently inactive ranger boat is essential, along with the deployment of a minimum boat crew to monitor the wreck as part of the ranger team. Establishing an information kiosk about the wreck in Maradhoo or any land based area is also a priority. The site is distinguished by its stunning soft corals, which are unique compared to other areas in the Maldives.

The water temperature around inner atoll and wreck can drop to 5 degrees in some spots, whereas in other parts of the Maldives, it typically remains around 20 degrees, further adding to its distinct appeal.

## 4.5. Addu as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve

Addu Atoll is one of the three designated UNESCO Biosphere Reserves (BRs) in the Maldives, having held this status for five years. However, despite the initial development of a logo, there has been limited progress in terms of active management, and concerns have been raised about the potential loss of BR status following the 10-year review, which is now five years away.

The reserve includes eight protected areas (PAs), and integrating these under a unified Biosphere Reserve management framework would significantly streamline their oversight. This could enable the reserve to function independently, potentially securing its long-term sustainability through privatization if necessary. Sustainable financing is a key challenge, as the lack of government funding has hindered infrastructure maintenance and management efforts. The Addu Nature Park, established with substantial donor funding, continues to attract councils for exposure trips, but there are currently no funds available for the repair and maintenance of critical infrastructure.

To address these financial challenges, there is a clear need to diversify funding sources, as reliance on central government support has proven insufficient. If needed, privatization could provide an avenue for sustainable financing. Additionally, it is essential to enhance the visibility of the Biosphere Reserve. The BR logo should be prominently displayed, not only within Addu but also at key points like the airport and on

council letterheads. Furthermore, the logo should be actively used in foreign trade and tourism fairs to promote Addu as a unique destination, leveraging its Biosphere Reserve status as a key asset for attracting international visitors and investment

## 5. Training Feedback Assessment

For monitoring, evaluation, and learning purposes, training attendees were asked to complete a brief online questionnaire both before and after the training. This approach was designed to assess the impact of the training on their knowledge of MPA management and to gather feedback for improving future sessions.

Before the first presentation, an online questionnaire was distributed to all attendees, with a QR code link displayed to encourage maximum participation. The pre-assessment survey consisted of seven questions aimed at gauging the participants' initial level of knowledge and understanding of the training's focus areas. The post-assessment survey, which contained eight questions, included a final question soliciting feedback on the training's delivery.

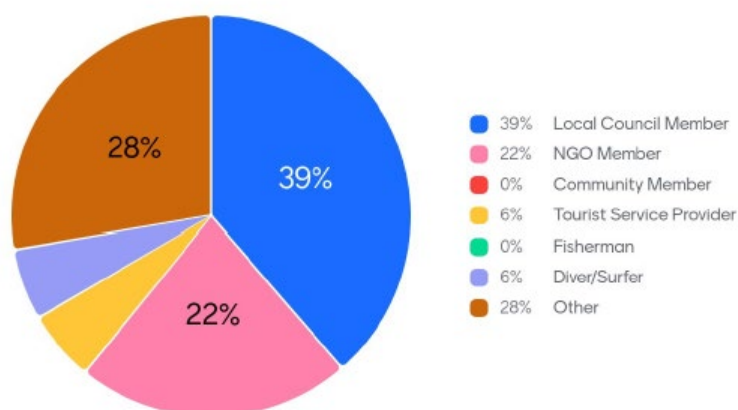
The questions were primarily multiple-choice, allowing participants to quickly navigate the survey. A total of 18 responses were received, providing valuable insights into the effectiveness of the training and areas for future improvement.

### 5.1. Composition of the Training

The training program was attended by 18 participants, with 53% of the trainees being male and 47% female. The participants were categorized as follows: 39% were Local Council Members, 22% represented NGOs, 6% were tourist service providers, 6% were divers or surfers, and 26% fell into other categories (Figure 1).

Although the sectors fishermen were included in the pre-assessment questionnaire (since the invitation requested the participation of industry stakeholders such as fishermen and tourist operators), no participant who involved in fishing attended the training.

Regarding experience in MPA management among the participants, 50% had no prior experience in this field. Meanwhile, 17% had over six years of experience, 17% had 1 to 3 years, 17% had less than one year of experience, while none had experience in the field between 4 and 6 years.



**Figure 1:** Professional capacity of the Participants.

## 5.2. Summary of Feedback

Feedback from participants indicated that 88% felt adequately supported during the training in terms of access to training materials, language assistance, and other resources. However, 13% of participants reported needing additional support, specifically requesting natural lighting in meeting room venue or less artificial lighting. To address this, future training sessions should hire venues that have more white lighting or natural lighting.

When assessing their confidence in applying the skills and knowledge gained from the training to MPA management, 47% of the participants expressed confidence, while 13% reported feeling very confident. Notably, only 7% of the participants expressed a lack of confidence in applying what they had learned. This response was largely attributed to the inclusion of participants from the City Council who are not directly involved in Protected Area (PA) management. Their limited hands-on experience with MPA-related activities may have contributed to their uncertainty in implementing the training concepts.

63% of participants felt that the training topics were relevant to their professional roles, underscoring the program's alignment with their practical needs in MPA management. Participants acknowledged that the training was very informative and emphasized the importance of group work and zoning exercise held at the training.

Participants provided several suggestions for improving future training sessions, including involving more diverse range of stakeholders. The suggested openly

advertising about the training in advance in public forums. These suggestions will be reviewed to enhance the effectiveness and inclusivity of future training programs.

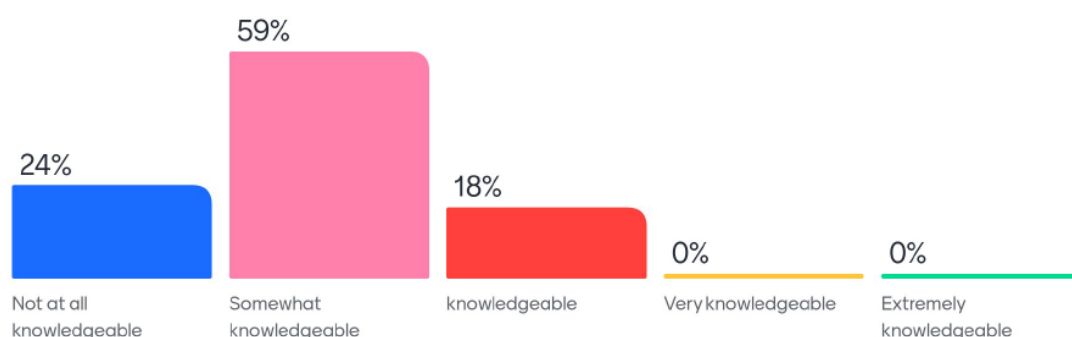
### 5.3. Knowledge Assessment

The participants' knowledge of MPA Management and Conservation was evaluated through both a pre-assessment and post-assessment, focusing on five criteria: not at all knowledgeable, somewhat knowledgeable, knowledgeable, very knowledgeable, and extremely knowledgeable.

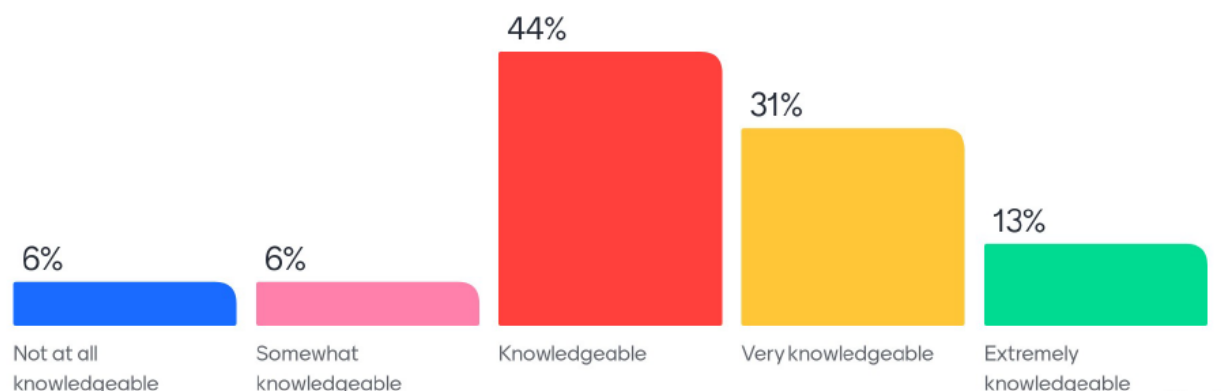
Before the training, 24% of participants identified themselves as not at all knowledgeable, 59% as somewhat knowledgeable, 18% as knowledgeable, and none rated themselves as very knowledgeable or extremely knowledgeable.

Following the training, the results showed a significant improvement in knowledge. The post-assessment indicated that only 6% of the participants were not at all knowledgeable, 6% were somewhat knowledgeable, 44% were knowledgeable, 31% were very knowledgeable, and 13% considered themselves extremely knowledgeable. By the end of the training, a majority of participants had reached a very knowledgeable or extremely knowledgeable level.

The training significantly enhanced participants' knowledge levels. Before the training, none of the participants rated themselves as "Very knowledgeable" or "Extremely knowledgeable." In contrast, the post-assessment revealed that 44% of participants now consider themselves at these advanced levels of knowledge – 31% as "Very knowledgeable" and 13% as "Extremely knowledgeable." This represents a notable increase in confidence and understanding resulting from the training. Additionally, the proportion of participants who rated themselves as "Knowledgeable" or better increased from 18% before the training to 44% after, highlighting a substantial improvement in their overall grasp of MPA management concepts.



**Figure 2:** Participants' knowledge assessment pre-training.



**Figure 3:** Participants' knowledge assessment post training.

## 6. Conclusion

The training of Marine Protected Area (MPA) Management Planning Training, held on September 17, 2024, in Addu City, as the final training of the series. Organized by the Ministry of Climate Change, Environment, and Energy (MoCCEE) and delivered by Island Wetlands with support from the Ocean Country Partnership Programs (OCP), the training was designed to equip the Addu City Council, NGOs, and community stakeholders with the necessary skills to develop and implement effective MPA management plans.

The training focused on critical areas such as the National PCA Management Framework, legal and policy contexts, and stakeholder engagement. Participants received practical tools and guidance for creating their own MPA Management Plans, enhancing their understanding of Maldives' marine ecosystems and sustainable management practices. Collaborative exercises on mock management plans allowed participants to apply their new knowledge and identify practical strategies for overcoming challenges such as development impacts, awareness gaps, and governance issues.

Reflecting on the training, it is evident that while the objectives were largely achieved – empowering councils to draft management plans – there is room for further refinement. Future trainings could benefit from more tailored support in translating technical terms and providing materials in Dhivehi to ensure broader understanding. Additionally, incorporating more time for hands-on exercises and stakeholder discussions could enhance practical application and address specific needs more effectively. Overall, the feedback underscores the importance of continuous improvement in training delivery to better support the development and implementation of MPA management plans.

# Appendix 1: Training Outline

**Total Duration: 6 hours**

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## **8:30:00 AM - 09:30 AM: Registration and Welcome**

- Registration of participants
  - Welcome address by Island Wetlands
  - Brief overview of the training program and objectives
  - Refreshment
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## **09:30 AM - 09:45 AM: Introduction to Marine Protected Areas**

- Presentation: Introduction to Marine Ecosystems
    - Introduction to ecosystems and biodiversity in the local context.
    - Importance of MPAs
    - Definition and significance of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)
    - Benefits of MPAs for biodiversity and local community
  - Discussion and Q&A (5 minutes)
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## **09:45 AM - 10:00 AM: Legal and Policy Context**

- Presentation: Legal and Policy Framework for Protected Areas in the Maldives.
    - Relevant laws and regulations
    - Roles and responsibilities of local stakeholders
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## **10:00 AM - 10:15 AM: Introduction to the National MPA Management Framework**

- Presentation: Overview of the National Framework for Management of Protected and Conserved Areas
  - Key components and objectives
  - Importance of effective PCA management
  - Importance for local stakeholders
- Discussion and Q&A (5 minutes)

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### **10:30 AM - 10:45 AM: Coffee Break**

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### **10:50 AM - 11:20 AM: Management Planning and Zoning**

- Presentation: Management Planning for MPAs
    - Definition and purpose of a management plan
    - Key questions a management plan should answer
    - Steps and processes involved
    - Importance of zoning and resource management
  - Discussion and Q&A (10 minutes)
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### **11:30 AM - 12:00 PM: Management Plan Preparation**

- Presentation: The process for developing a management plan
    - Data and information collection
    - Stakeholder and community engagement activities
  - Interactive session on identifying resources and establishing a planning team
    - Case study analysis on stakeholder engagement
    - Stakeholder Mapping and Engagement Strategies
  - Discussion and Q&A (5 minutes)
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### **12:00 PM - 12:20 PM: Writing a Management Plan – Part 1**

- Presentation: Key elements of writing a management plan
    - Description of the Site
    - Key Values of the Site
  - Breakout session: Groups will brainstorm and discuss key facts about their selected MPA
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### **12:20 PM - 01:20 PM: Lunch Break**

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### **01:20 PM - 01:50 PM: Writing a Management Plan – Part 2**

- Presentation: Key elements of writing a management plan
  - Identification of Constraints, Opportunities, and Threats
  - Governance
- Group activity on identifying key values and threats
  - Discussion on governance structures and policies

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### **01:50 PM - 02:20 PM: Writing a Management Plan – Part 3**

- Presentation: Key elements of writing a management plan
    - Setting vision and management objectives
    - Developing management strategies and action plans
  - Group activity on creating SMART objectives
    - Group discussion on effective management strategies
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### **02:20 PM - 03:00 PM: Steps for Effective Management Plan**

- Presentation: Resource Need Assessment
    - Identify needs in capacity building, human resources, finance, technology, equipment, and infrastructure.
  - Presentation: Market Assessment/Destination Assessment with Willingness to Pay
    - Evaluate potential markets, tourism opportunities, and assess visitor willingness to pay.
    - Overcoming common challenges
  - Discussion and Q&A (5 minutes)
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### **03:00 PM - 03:20 PM: Steps for Effective Management Plan (cont)**

- Presentation: Sustainable Financing
  - Discussion and Q&A (5 minutes)
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### **03:20 PM - 03:30 PM: Coffee Break**

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### **03:30 PM - 04:00 PM: Developing a Mock MPA Management Plan**

- Hands-on exercise in creating a management plan
  - Presentations and feedback sessions
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### **4:00 PM - 04:15 PM: Closing Remarks and Next Steps**

- Summary of key takeaways from the training
- Discussion on next steps and follow-up actions
- Completion of feedback forms
- Closing remarks by the facilitator
- Refreshments



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### **Training Delivery Methods:**

The training will be delivered in person to and the following methods will be taken in to account while delivering the training.

- Interactive presentations and lectures
- Group discussions and workshops
- Case studies and real-life examples
- Practical exercises
- Evaluation and feedback sessions

### **Assessment and Certification:**

To ensure the effectiveness of this training program it is crucial to integrate continuous assessment within the sessions. The following methods will be considered to ensure the effectiveness of the training:

- Continuous assessment through quizzes and practical exercises
- Final evaluation based on participation and group work

Certification of completion for all participants.

# Appendix 2: Pictures from the Training



# Ocean Country Partnership Programme

The Ocean Country Partnership Programme (OCP) is a bilateral technical assistance and capacity building programme that provides tailored support to countries to manage the marine environment more sustainably, including by strengthening marine science expertise, developing science-based policy and management tools and creating educational resources for coastal communities. The OCP delivers work under three thematic areas: biodiversity, marine pollution, and sustainable seafood. Funding is provided through the overarching Blue Planet Fund (BPF) by the UK Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).



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