

Ocean Country Partnership Programme

Gender Equality, Social Inclusion (GESI) & Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (SEAH) Safeguards Assessment and Recommendations for OCPP Projects in Maldives

Author(s): JEA Consulting and Communications

Date: February 2025

For further information please contact:

Joint Nature Conservation Committee

Quay House

2 East Station Road

Fletton Quays

Peterborough, PE2 8YY

<https://jncc.gov.uk/our-work/ocean-country-partnership-programme/>

Communications@jncc.gov.uk

Recommended citation: J.E.A. 2025. Gender Equality, Social Inclusion (GESI) & Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (SEAH) Safeguards Assessment and Recommendations for OCPP Projects in Maldives, 77 pp

Funding Acknowledgement: This project was funded with UK International Development from the UK Government.

Evidence Quality Assurance: This report is compliant with [JNCC's Evidence Quality Assurance Policy](#).

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.

Open Government Licence: This information is licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/. Note that some images may not be Crown Copyright; please check sources for conditions of re-use.



© Crown copyright 2025

Contents

- 1. Introduction 5
 - 1.1. Background 5
 - 1.2. Purpose of Assessment 6
- 2. Methodology 6
 - 2.1. The JEA Framework for assessing GESI and SEAH integration 6
 - 2.2. Tools and Indicators 11
- 3. Comprehensive Assessment of the SACEP Symposium 12
- 4. Comprehensive Assessment of the PCA (Protected and Conserved Areas) Forum 16
- 5. Comprehensive Assessment of the PAME (Protected Area Management Effectiveness) Project 22
- 6. Comprehensive Assessment of the Stakeholder Engagement 27
- 7. Recommendations for OCPP Workshop-Based Engagements 34
- 8. Recommendations for OCPP to Achieve GESI-Sensitive, Empowering, and Transformative Integration 36
- 10. Annex 48
 - 10.1 GESI Questionnaire 48
 - 10.2 Rationale for the GESI and SEAH Assessment Questionnaire 51
 - Section 1: Analysis and Design 51
 - Section 2: Target Groups and Engagement 52
 - Section 3: SEAH Safeguards 53
 - Section 4: Monitoring and Evaluation 54
 - Section 5: Indicators for GESI Transformative 54
 - 10.3 Global Standards informing GESI Transformative Indicators: 56

10.3 Indicators for GESI and SEAH Assessment	57
Analysis and Design Indicators	57
Target Groups and Engagement Indicators	57
SEAH Safeguards Indicators	57
Monitoring and Evaluation Indicators	58
GESI Transformative Indicators	58
11.1 Types of Indicators and What They Measure	60
Input Indicators	60
Output Indicators	60
Outcome Indicators.....	61
Impact Indicators	61
Process Indicators	62
Summary of Types and Their Focus	62
11.6 Key Questions and Indicators for the JEA Framework and Assessment	64
GESI Assessment Questions and Indicators	64
SEAH Compliance Questions and Indicators	66
11.6 Key Questions and Indicators for the JEA Framework and Assessment	69

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

The Ocean Country Partnership Programme (OCP) is a UK Government programme funded through official development assistance (ODA) as part of the Blue Planet Fund. Through the OCP, the UK government partners with ODA-eligible countries to deliver tangible and positive impacts on the livelihoods of coastal communities that depend on healthy marine ecosystems.

OCP has been working in partnership with Maldives since 2021, working across key areas include marine biodiversity (focused on Marine Protected Areas), marine pollution, and marine pollution emergency response. For the purposes of this review, four case studies from the OCP have been selected by OCP staff to give examples of the type of work that has been delivered to date. This report assesses the extent to which these projects have integrated Gender Equality & Social Inclusion (GESI) principles and Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (SEAH) safeguards, which are essential for inclusive and ethical conservation practices

The report focuses on the following 4 case studies of OCPs work:

1. PAME (Protected Area Management Effectiveness) project
2. Comprehensive Assessment of the SACEP Symposium
3. Comprehensive Reassessment of the Stakeholder Engagement Strategy
4. Protected and Conserved Area Forum

The International Development (Gender Equality) Act 2014 makes explicit the legal requirement to address gender (in)equality in the design and delivery of UK government programmes funded through its Official Development Assistance (ODA) budget. At a minimum, all Defra/Cefas ODA programmes must contribute to poverty reduction and gender equality (International Development Act), as well as international commitments (as part of the SDGs) to 'do no harm'. Defra (the UKs Department for Environment, Fisheries and Rural Affairs) who fund the OCP programme, have made a commitment that all OCP partnerships should be assessed as GESI Sensitive by November 2025. This report will play a critical role in understanding how OCP activities in Maldives stand currently, and in identifying recommendations around how GESI considerations could be improved in the future to meet this important milestone.

1.2. Purpose of Assessment

The primary objective of this assessment is to evaluate GESI sensitivity and SEAH risk mitigation across four OCPP projects in the Maldives. The key aims include:

- Assessing inclusivity and participation of women, marginalized communities, and at-risk groups in marine conservation projects.
- Evaluating SEAH prevention measures embedded in project design and implementation.
- Providing evidence-based recommendations for enhancing GESI and SEAH safeguards in future conservation initiatives under OCPP.
- Developing an action-oriented framework to ensure future projects promote equity, diversity, and safeguarding in stakeholder engagement.

2. Methodology

2.1. The JEA Framework for assessing GESI and SEAH integration

Development of the Frameworks

The GESI and SEAH frameworks were developed to provide a structured, evidence-based approach to assessing and improving Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) integration and Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (SEAH) compliance in marine conservation and governance projects. These frameworks are designed to:

- Ensure compliance with international standards and commitments (e.g., UN SDGs, Defra Policies, FCDO GESI and safeguarding policies, OECD-DAC Intersectionality Lens).
- Support OCPP partnerships in meeting GESI-sensitive standards by November 2025.
- Bridge the gap between policy and practice, offering clear pathways for projects to move from basic compliance to transformative change.
- Introduce measurable, structured assessment criteria that allow for consistent evaluation across different project contexts.

Tools and Frameworks Used in Development

The JEA Frameworks draw upon international best practices and widely recognised assessment tools, including:

- UK Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) Systems Change Pillar – Institutionalising change in governance and decision-making.
- CARE’s GESI Framework – Power analysis and intersectionality for addressing social inequalities.
- OECD-DAC’s Intersectionality Lens – Ensuring multiple layers of marginalisation are identified and addressed.
- UN Women’s Gender Mainstreaming Approach – Embedding GESI across all stages of programme design and implementation.
- World Bank’s Gender Equality Strategy (2023–2030) – Linking economic empowerment to sustainable social transformation.
- Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) – Ensuring rights-driven, accountable, and inclusive interventions.
- OCPP GESI Mainstreaming Requirements – Aligning with Defra’s requirement that all OCPP-funded projects reach GESI-sensitive standards by 2025.

By synthesising these methodologies, the frameworks create a comprehensive, adaptable tool that is applicable across diverse conservation and governance initiatives.

Added Value of the Frameworks

These frameworks provide several key advantages over generic GESI and SEAH assessments:

1. Customisation for Marine Conservation and Coastal Community Governance – Unlike generic GESI/SEAH tools, this framework is specifically designed for marine conservation, protected area governance, and policy-focused initiatives.
2. Scalability and Adaptability – The frameworks apply to projects of varying scales, from local community initiatives to national marine governance programmes.
3. Structured Progression from Compliance to Transformation – By defining clear tiers (GESI Unaware to GESI Transformative; SEAH Non-Compliant to SEAH Compliant), the frameworks allow organisations to track incremental improvements.
4. Institutionalising Long-Term Change – The frameworks move beyond short-term compliance by embedding GESI and SEAH within governance, funding structures, and decision-making bodies.

5. Incorporation of Intersectional Analysis – Acknowledging multiple barriers to participation, these frameworks ensure that gender, disability, socio-economic status, and other factors are equally considered.

Definition of Key Tiers and Compliance Levels

GESI Framework Tiers

GESI Unaware: No integration of gender or social inclusion considerations. Projects may unintentionally reinforce existing inequalities.

GESI Sensitive: Basic recognition of GESI but limited action beyond ensuring “do no harm.” Initial steps taken to include marginalised groups.

GESI Empowering: Active measures taken to remove barriers, promote participation, and strengthen leadership of underrepresented groups.

GESI Transformative: Systemic change occurs, embedding long-term inclusion through institutional and policy reforms that redistribute power and resources.

While our assessment framework was designed to categorize projects as either GESI-sensitive or not, we recognized that some projects demonstrated clear, deliberate efforts toward inclusivity and gender balance, even if they had not yet met the full criteria for GESI-sensitive status. It would have been unfair and counterproductive to overlook these meaningful attempts, as they represent real progress in integrating GESI principles. Therefore, in select cases, we introduced the concept of **Partially GESI-Sensitive** to acknowledge initiatives that have taken significant steps in the right direction but still require further improvements to achieve full GESI-sensitive status. This approach allows us to give credit where it is due while providing actionable recommendations to strengthen inclusion and equity in future initiatives.

Partially GESI Sensitive: demonstrates awareness of GESI principles and incorporates some inclusive practices, but barriers remain in full participation, decision-making power, and equitable benefits for marginalized groups.

SEAH Compliance Levels

- **SEAH Non-Compliant:** No formal mechanisms exist to prevent or address SEAH risks. Stakeholders are not aware of reporting procedures.
- **Partially Compliant-** Some SEAH safeguards exist, but gaps remain in implementation, such as limited reporting mechanisms, inconsistent training coverage, or lack of survivor-centered responses.
- **SEAH Compliant:** Policies and reporting mechanisms are in place, widely communicated, and actively enforced. Stakeholders have clear channels for raising concerns, and SEAH training is provided.

The table below outlines the definitions of each level of GESI integration and indicators used to assess the level of integration under each tier.

Table 1 JEA GESI assessment framework

Framework Component	Definition	GESI Unaware	GESI Sensitive	GESI Empowering	GESI Transformative
Analysis and Design	Evaluates if GESI considerations are integrated at the planning stage.	No gender or social analysis; systemic barriers unaddressed.	Ensures "do no harm" principles but lacks active strategies.	Identifies and removes barriers to equitable access.	Addresses root causes of exclusion, integrating gender-sensitive governance.
Stakeholder Engagement	Assesses whether marginalised groups are consulted and included in planning.	No meaningful engagement of marginalised groups.	Stakeholder consultation includes diverse voices but lacks decision-making power.	Women and marginalised groups actively participate in governance.	Leadership and decision-making roles for marginalised groups, shifting power dynamics.
Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)	Evaluates how projects track GESI-related outcomes.	No disaggregated data or tracking of marginalised groups.	Basic disaggregation of data but limited depth in analysis.	Comprehensive tracking using both qualitative and quantitative indicators.	Evaluation leads to policy advocacy and systemic reforms.
Team Capacity	Assesses whether the project team has GESI expertise and resources.	No expertise or resourcing for GESI.	Relevant expertise drawn on as needed, but not fully embedded.	Dedicated staff time and expertise allocated for GESI.	Long-term institutionalisation of GESI roles and governance.

The table below outlines the definitions of SEAH compliance and non-compliance with indicators used to assess compliance level.

Table 2 JEA SEAH compliance framework

Framework Component	Definition	SEAH Non-Compliant	SEAH Compliant
SEAH Risk Identification and Mitigation	Assesses whether SEAH risks are recognised and mitigated.	No SEAH risk identification or safeguards.	SEAH risks identified with policies in place.
SEAH Reporting Mechanisms	Evaluates whether stakeholders have access to safe and confidential SEAH reporting.	No reporting mechanisms for SEAH incidents.	Policies and reporting mechanisms in place and accessible to all stakeholders.
SEAH Training & Awareness	Assesses if project teams and communities receive SEAH prevention training.	No SEAH training provided to staff or stakeholders.	Staff trained in SEAH prevention and response mechanisms.
SEAH Governance & Accountability	Evaluates how SEAH safeguards are integrated into governance structures.	No formal SEAH oversight mechanisms.	SEAH policies embedded into project governance structures, with independent oversight.

2.2. Tools and Indicators

This assessment employed customized tools and indicators specifically developed for this project to systematically evaluate each OCPP initiative. These tools are based on international best practices, including guidelines from the UK Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) Systems Change Pillar, CARE's GESI Framework, OECD-DAC's Intersectionality Lens, UN Women's Gender Mainstreaming Approach, World Bank's Gender Equality Strategy (2023–2030), and the Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA). The tools developed for this assessment include:

- **Key Questions and Indicators for the JEA Framework and Assessment:** This is a structured tool designed to evaluate GESI (Gender Equality and Social Inclusion) integration and SEAH (Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment) compliance in projects. It establishes clear assessment criteria by posing targeted key questions and defining measurable indicators across multiple categories such as Analysis & Design, Stakeholder Engagement, Monitoring & Evaluation, Team Capacity, Sustainability, and Transformational Impact. The tool ensures that GESI considerations are embedded at all stages of project planning, implementation, and evaluation, while also assessing whether SEAH risks are identified, mitigated, and effectively addressed. It provides a practical framework for monitoring inclusivity, participation, policy influence, and safeguarding measures, forming the foundation for the GESI and SEAH assessment questionnaire.
- **GESI and SEAH Assessment Questionnaire:** This questionnaire evaluates how effectively projects integrate GESI and SEAH considerations across their lifecycle. It aligns with OCPP GESI mainstreaming levels, assessing interventions from GESI-Unaware to GESI-Transformative.
- **Indicators for GESI and SEAH Assessment:** A structured list of measurable indicators, categorized into input, output, outcome, impact, and process indicators, to assess GESI and SEAH implementation at different project stages. [Ref. Indicators for GESI and SEAH Assessment]
- **Typology of Indicators Framework:** Categorizes GESI and SEAH indicators based on their focus areas, including resources allocation, participation, behavioral change, institutional reforms, and data-driven monitoring mechanisms. This framework ensures projects align with global standards on gender equality and social inclusion. [Ref. Typology of Indicators]
- **Justification and Rationale for the GESI and SEAH Assessment Questionnaire:** This document explains the alignment of GESI and SEAH indicators with the OCPP framework, justifying their role in ensuring inclusive participation, safeguarding measures, and long-term social transformation. [Ref. Justification and Rationale for the GESI and SEAH Assessment Questionnaire]

- The JEA Framework for Assessing GESI and SEAH Integration: This framework evaluates projects across eight components: Analysis and Design, Inclusivity, Accessibility, SEAH Safeguards, Monitoring and Evaluation and Team Capacity. It ensures a structured approach to assessing the effectiveness of GESI and SEAH implementation.

These tools are annexed at end of this report.

3. Comprehensive Assessment of the SACEP Symposium

The SACEP Symposium was a regional learning and knowledge-sharing event aimed at strengthening marine pollution response coordination across South Asia. The symposium brought together government agencies, researchers, conservation organizations, and policymakers to discuss transboundary environmental challenges. While not explicitly gender-focused, the symposium incorporated some GESI elements by ensuring diverse participation and collecting gender-disaggregated data. However, structured SEAH safeguards, targeted engagement of marginalized groups, and inclusive agenda-setting were lacking. This event provides an opportunity to integrate gender-responsive policies into regional marine governance discussions and strengthen SEAH compliance in large-scale environmental symposiums.

JEA Framework Analysis for SACEP Symposium

Table below outlines GESI compliance level of SACEP Symposium based on the assessment.

Table 3 Summary of GESI compliance assessment for the SACEP symposium

Framework Component	SACEP Symposium Status	Assessment Level
Analysis and Design	No structured gender and social inclusion analysis was conducted before planning, though diversity considerations were made during invitations.	GESI Unaware
Stakeholder Engagement	Efforts were made to ensure inclusivity in invitations, but final selection was dependent on national-level decisions outside of OCPP's control.	GESI Sensitive

Monitoring & Evaluation	Gender-disaggregated data was collected during registration but was not used to evaluate GESI impact.	GESI Sensitive
Team Capacity	No dedicated GESI focal point or structured capacity-building efforts for facilitators or participants.	GESI Unaware

What Was Done Well in GESI Integration

- Diversity was considered at the invitation stage, with a focus on expertise rather than seniority to allow a broader range of participants.
- Full travel and subsistence were covered for attendees to remove financial barriers.
- Mixed-country and group discussion formats encouraged participation from different backgrounds.
- Gender-disaggregated data was collected during registration, covering gender, disability, and caregiving responsibilities.

How Future Regional Workshops Can Improve GESI Integration (Step-by-Step Progression Model).

The table below shows recommendations that can be implemented to strengthen GESI integration in future regional workshops. The recommendations are designed to assist OCPP achieve GESI sensitive level and progressively work towards reaching GESI transformative level engagements.

Table 4 Recommendations to improve GESI integration for future regional workshops

Progression Level	Recommended Actions for Future Regional Workshops
Achieving GESI Sensitive	- Conduct a structured gender and social inclusion analysis before planning.
	- Work closely with SACEP and national partners to recommend diverse participants from different levels.
	- Ensure disaggregated data is used not just for participant tracking but also for measuring event inclusivity.
	- Provide pre-workshop training for facilitators on inclusive dialogue and engagement.

Achieving GESI Empowering	- Require at least 40% representation of women and marginalised groups in all workshop speaker panels.
	- Institutionalise a regional gender-inclusive policy dialogue.
	- Develop specific GESI-focused sessions within the workshop agenda.
	- Provide leadership opportunities for underrepresented groups, e.g., women-led panel discussions.
Achieving GESI Transformative	- Establish a permanent advisory group on GESI integration for all SACEP environmental governance events.

Assessing SACEP Symposium’s SEAH Compliance

Table below outlines SEAH compliance level of the SACEP Symposium based on the assessment.

Table 5 Assessment of SEAH compliance for the SACEP symposium

Framework Component	SACEP Symposium Status	Assessment Level
SEAH Risk Identification and Mitigation	No structured SEAH risk assessment was conducted prior to the event.	SEAH Non-Compliant
SEAH Reporting Mechanisms	A SEAH lead was identified and introduced at the event, but there was no structured reporting system.	SEAH Partially Compliant
SEAH Training & Awareness	OCPD staff had completed SEAH training, but no specific SEAH awareness session was conducted for all attendees. Local in- country contractor was made aware of the policies	SEAH Partially Compliant

SEAH Governance & Accountability	No formal SEAH oversight mechanisms were in place. The SEAH contact person was available, but the complaint-handling process was not documented.	SEAH Non-Compliant
----------------------------------	--	--------------------

What Was Done Well in SEAH Safeguarding

- OCPP staff were trained in SEAH prevention methods before the symposium.
- A SEAH main contact person was selected and introduced at the start of the event.
- In-country contractor was made aware of safeguarding policies
- Attendees were informed about SEAH reporting options, though the process was not formalised.

How Future Regional Workshops Can Improve SEAH Compliance

The table below outlines recommendations that can be implemented in future regional workshops to improve SEAH compliance progressively.

Table 6 Recommendations to improve SEAH compliance for future regional workshops

Phase	Recommended Actions for SEAH Compliance in Future Regional Workshops
Phase 1: Immediate Action	- Conduct a full SEAH risk assessment before planning.
	- Establish a written SEAH policy that aligns with international safeguarding standards.
	- Implement confidential and accessible reporting channels for SEAH complaints.
	- Ensure all facilitators and event organisers are trained in SEAH risk mitigation.
Phase 2: Strengthening Compliance	- Require all workshop facilitators to complete SEAH awareness training. Share commitments to SEAH safeguarding with participants.
	- Introduce SEAH-free participation guidelines in all event documentation.
	- Develop structured complaint-handling procedures, ensuring an independent SEAH review team is involved.
	- Establish clear enforcement mechanisms if SEAH violations occur.

Phase 3: Full Compliance	- Ensure SEAH policies are integrated into regional event governance.
	- Conduct annual SEAH compliance audits for all regional workshops.
	- Develop an independent SEAH oversight body responsible for monitoring and responding to incidents.
	- Institutionalise mandatory SEAH awareness sessions for all future regional dialogues.

Best Practices from Learning & Knowledge-Sharing Events

Example: UNEP’s Global Conference on Marine Pollution and Sustainable Ocean Management

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) hosted the Global Conference on Marine Pollution and Sustainable Ocean Management in Nairobi, Kenya, in October 2021. The event brought together scientists, policymakers, industry leaders, and civil society organizations to discuss strategies for addressing marine pollution and advancing sustainable ocean governance. While the conference was primarily focused on technical and policy-driven discussions, UNEP incorporated GESI and SEAH considerations by ensuring that all discussions, panels, and policies reflected diverse voices and safeguarded participant well-being. The event organizers implemented a speaker diversity quota, ensuring that experts from underrepresented communities, including women, youth, and small island nations, contributed to leadership discussions. Additionally, SEAH safeguarding measures were embedded into the event, including anonymous reporting channels, mandatory SEAH training for facilitators, and strict anti-harassment protocols. This conference demonstrated that GESI and SEAH principles can be seamlessly integrated into policy-driven events without being the central theme, but rather as a fundamental standard for inclusive and safe participation.

4. Comprehensive Assessment of the PCA (Protected and Conserved Areas) Forum

The PCA Forum was a national-level knowledge exchange and stakeholder engagement event focused on PCA governance and conservation best practices. The PCA Forum was structured as a capacity-building workshop, engaging government agencies, conservation practitioners, and marine sector stakeholders. The event took place in January 2024, before the current formal focus on GESI and SEAH, and so it should be noted that training and processes have improved since the activity took place. While women made up 73% of speakers, there were limited participation opportunities for grassroots conservation leaders, fisher groups, and vulnerable community groups.

Additionally, the event lacked formal SEAH safeguarding policies. Moving forward, the PCA Forum can be strengthened by embedding gender-sensitive governance discussions, ensuring equitable access, and integrating SEAH risk management into workshop protocols.

JEA Analysis for PCA Forum

Table below outlines GESI compliance level of the PCA Forum based on the assessment.

Table 7 Summary of GESI compliance assessment for the PCA Forum

Framework Component	PCA Forum Status	Assessment Level
Analysis and Design	No structured gender and social inclusion analysis was conducted before planning.	GESI Unaware
Stakeholder Engagement	Women were well-represented among speakers (73%), and young professionals from ACU were invited. However, grassroots conservation leaders, and marginalised community representatives had limited roles.	GESI Sensitive
Monitoring & Evaluation	Gender-disaggregated data was collected during registration, but no structured indicators tracked GESI impact beyond participation rates. No disability data was collected.	GESI Sensitive
Team Capacity	No dedicated GESI focal point was assigned, and GESI training was not provided to facilitators or attendees.	GESI Unaware

What Was Done Well in GESI Integration

- 73% of speakers were women, showcasing strong representation at a leadership level.
- Young professionals from ACU were supported to attend, fostering youth engagement.
- Gender-disaggregated data was collected, providing insight into participation trends.
- Registration forms included an option for attendees to disclose accessibility requirements, but disability data was not actively tracked.

How Future Similar Events Can Improve GESI Integration (Step-by-Step Progression Model)

The table below outlines recommendations that can be implemented to strengthen GESI integration in similar future forums. The recommendations are designed to assist OCPP achieve GESI sensitive level and progressively work towards reaching GESI transformative level engagements.

Table 8 Recommendations to improve GESI integration for future similar events to the PCA Forum

Progression Level	Recommended Actions for Future Similar Events
Achieving GESI Sensitive	- Conduct a structured gender and social inclusion analysis before event planning.
	- Ensure that invitations and selection processes prioritise representation from grassroots conservation groups and marginalised communities.
	- Expand disaggregated data collection beyond gender to include socio-economic background and disability representation.
	- Provide GESI training for facilitators and organisers.
	- Develop a transparent selection process for speakers that prioritises diversity and inclusion.
Achieving GESI Empowering	- Require at least 40% representation of grassroots conservationists, fisher groups, and community representatives in speaker panels and workshop discussions.
	- Institutionalise a formal consultation process for underrepresented groups before each PCA Forum.
	- Develop specific sessions focused on the intersection of conservation governance and social inclusion.
	- Provide leadership development opportunities for women and young professionals.

Achieving GESI Transformative	- Establish a permanent advisory body on GESI integration within PCA governance structures.
	- Implement a policy requiring future PCA Forums to formally integrate GESI considerations.
	- Advocate for national conservation policies that embed GESI-sensitive governance principles.
	- Ensure that marginalised groups hold leadership roles in PCA governance decision-making processes.
	- Institutionalise GESI budgeting to ensure financial support for diverse participation.

Assessing PCA Forum’s SEAH Compliance (table 9)

Table below outlines SEAH compliance level of the PCA Forum based on the assessment.

Table 9 Assessment of SEAH compliance for the PCA Forum

Framework Component	PCA Forum Status	Assessment Level
SEAH Risk Identification and Mitigation	No structured SEAH risk assessment was conducted prior to the event.	SEAH Non-Compliant
SEAH Reporting Mechanisms	No formal SEAH reporting system was in place during the forum.	SEAH Non-Compliant
SEAH Training & Awareness	No mandatory SEAH awareness sessions were conducted for attendees or facilitators.	SEAH Non-Compliant
SEAH Governance & Accountability	No formal SEAH oversight mechanisms were in place.	SEAH Non-Compliant

What Was Done Well in SEAH Safeguarding?

JNCC has a safeguarding policy that applies to its activities, but it was not widely known at the time the Forum took place in January 2024.

How Future Similar Events Can Improve SEAH Compliance

The table below outlines recommendations that can be implemented in future events similar to PCA Forum to improve SEAH compliance progressively.

Table 10 Recommendations to improve SEAH compliance for future similar events to the PCA Forum

Phase	Recommended Actions for SEAH Compliance in Future Similar Events
Phase 1: Immediate Action	- Conduct a full SEAH risk assessment before planning.
	- Establish a written SEAH policy that aligns with international safeguarding standards.
	- Implement confidential and accessible SEAH reporting channels.
	- Ensure facilitators and organisers receive basic SEAH training.
	- Develop SEAH awareness materials for all attendees.
Phase 2: Strengthening Compliance	- Require 100% of forum facilitators and participants to complete SEAH awareness training.
	- Introduce SEAH-free participation guidelines in event documentation.
	- Develop structured complaint-handling procedures.
	- Establish clear enforcement mechanisms for SEAH violations.
	- Implement anonymous SEAH reporting mechanisms.
Phase 3: Full Compliance	- Ensure SEAH policies are embedded into PCA Forum governance structures.

	- Conduct annual SEAH compliance audits to maintain safeguarding integrity.
	- Develop an independent SEAH oversight body for handling and responding to incidents.
	- Institutionalise mandatory SEAH awareness sessions for all participants and facilitators.
	- Ensure that SEAH training and policies are included in PCA Forum planning frameworks.

Best Practices from Conservation Workshops

Example 1: Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association (WIOMSA) Symposium (Mauritius, 2021)

The WIOMSA Symposium, held in Mauritius in October 2021, was the largest marine science and governance knowledge exchange platform in the Western Indian Ocean region. It brought together government agencies, conservation NGOs, researchers, and community leaders to share best practices on MPA management, sustainable fisheries, and climate adaptation strategies. A key feature was its focus on participatory marine governance, where local community stakeholders co-led discussions on sustainable marine resource management. The symposium ensured GESI considerations were mainstreamed by requiring gender-balanced panels and integrating sessions specifically on gender-inclusive conservation governance. Additionally, SEAH safeguards were built into event protocols, including confidential reporting channels and safe spaces for discussions on workplace harassment in conservation professions. This symposium serves as an excellent example of how large-scale knowledge exchange events can be structured to include marginalized voices and ensure SEAH-safe learning environments.

Example 2: South Pacific Regional Fisheries Governance Workshop (Fiji, 2022)

The South Pacific Regional Fisheries Governance Workshop, held in Suva, Fiji, in May 2022, focused on enhancing the capacity of policymakers, fisheries enforcement officers, and marine conservation practitioners in sustainable fisheries management. The workshop introduced interactive training modules on marine biodiversity protection, compliance with international fisheries agreements, and gender-sensitive fisheries governance. GESI considerations were integrated by ensuring equal participation from men and women in fisheries management discussions, and dedicated sessions were held to address the challenges faced by women in the fisheries sector. SEAH safeguarding measures included an anonymous complaint system and pre-event SEAH

training for all facilitators and participants. The workshop demonstrated how gender-sensitive capacity-building can be embedded into national fisheries governance without making gender the sole focus of discussions.

5. Comprehensive Assessment of the PAME (Protected Area Management Effectiveness) Project

In 2021/2022, the OCPP collaborated with the Government of Maldives to undertake a pilot study into the management effectiveness of three different types of MPA in Maldivian waters.

The aim of this study was to increase understanding on how these sites function, determine how well they are being managed, highlight key success areas, and provide recommendations on how management could be improved. The three sites for the study were chosen based on their different management attributes:

- Hanifaru Area as a national Marine Protected Area (MPA) under the Maldivian Environment Protection Act (No.4/93) and a core zone of the Baa Atoll UNESCO Biosphere Reserve with an active management plan.
- Kudahuvadhoo Kandulhi a grouper spawning aggregation site regulated under the Fisheries Act of the Maldives (No.14/2019) as a fisheries protection measure.
- Angsana Velavaru house reef as a 'no take' site under the Tourism Boundary Regulation (No.2012/R-7) and a potential candidate for designation as an Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measure (OECM).

Management effectiveness was assessed for each MPA using a tool called the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) version 4, which involves answering 38 questions based around the different stages of MPA management. Assessments were completed based on the best available evidence for each MPA and extensive stakeholder engagement through online surveys, meetings and workshops. Stakeholders included local councils, Women's Development Committees (WDCs), fisher groups, NGOs and management authorities. Draft results were validated by stakeholders through anonline consultation, meetings and workshops before being finalised.

The project was completed in 2021 – 2022, before GESI and SEAH guidance were formally communicated to the teams. While the project incorporated some gender and

social inclusion elements, it lacked a structured GESI framework and specific SEAH risk mitigation measures.

GESI Compliance Assessment for PAME Project

Table below outlines GESI compliance level of the PAME project based on the assessment.

Table 11 Summary of GESI compliance assessment for the PAME project

Framework Component	PAME Status	Assessment Level
Analysis and Design	No structured gender and social inclusion analysis was conducted prior to the assessment, but stakeholder mapping included Women’s Development Councils (WDCs), fisherfolk, and local councils.	Partially GESI Sensitive
Stakeholder Engagement	The project engaged 95 individuals across the three sites, including WDCs, fishers, and local council representatives. Women’s participation was 26% overall, with higher female participation in Hanifaru workshops (32%). However, engagement of fisherwomen and other marginalised community members was limited.	GESI Sensitive
Monitoring & Evaluation	Gender-disaggregated data was collected, but no indicators tracked GESI impact beyond participation rates. No data was collected on disability or socio-economic status.	GESI Sensitive
Team Capacity	No dedicated GESI focal point or structured GESI training was included in the assessment team.	GESI Unaware

What Was Done Well in GESI Integration?

- Stakeholder mapping included WDCs, fishers, and local councils, ensuring that diverse groups were invited.
- PAME assessment findings contributed to the development of a national management framework, which includes principles of equitable management and stakeholder collaborative engagement
- Recommendations encouraged stronger future engagement in MPA management through the formation of inclusive steering groups.
- Translation into Dhivehi enabled non-English speakers to fully engage.
- Transport support was provided to enable participation from different islands.

How Future PAME Assessments Can Improve GESI Integration (Step-by-Step Progression Model)

The table below outlines recommendations that can be implemented to strengthen GESI integration in future PAME assessments. The recommendations are designed to assist OCPP achieve GESI sensitive level and progressively work towards reaching GESI transformative level engagements.

Table 12 Recommendations to improve GESI integration for future PAME assessments

Progression Level	Recommended Actions for Future PAME Projects
Achieving GESI Sensitive	Conduct a structured gender and social inclusion analysis before stakeholder engagement.
	Ensure proactive and deliberate outreach to underrepresented community members.
	Expand disaggregated data collection beyond gender to track disability and socio-economic representation.
	Provide basic GESI training for assessment teams to improve inclusion in engagement approaches.
Achieving GESI Empowering	Require at least 40% representation of women, fisher groups, and marginalised communities in stakeholder consultations.
	Institutionalise a formal consultation process for underrepresented groups before finalising assessment recommendations.
	Develop specific GESI-focused indicators for MPA effectiveness assessments to track inclusivity and community benefits.
Achieving GESI Transformation	Ensure all future PAME assessments integrate GESI Systematically
	Advocate for national-level policy reforms that embed gender-sensitive governance in MPA management.
	Institutionalise GESI-responsive budgeting to ensure financial support for participation and benefit-sharing for marginalised communities.

SEAH Compliance Assessment for PAME (table 13)

Table below outlines SEAH compliance level of the PAME project based on the assessment.

Table 13 Assessment of SEAH compliance for the PAME project

Framework Component	PAME Status	Assessment Level
SEAH Risk Identification and Mitigation	No structured SEAH risk assessment was conducted as part of the engagement process.	SEAH Non-Compliant
SEAH Reporting Mechanisms	No formal SEAH reporting system was established for stakeholder interactions. Community members were not informed about SEAH reporting mechanisms.	SEAH Non-Compliant
SEAH Training & Awareness	JNCC staff were expected to follow the JNCC Safeguarding Policy, but SEAH training was not widely implemented at the time of the assessment.	SEAH Non-Compliant
SEAH Governance & Accountability	No formal SEAH oversight mechanisms were in place, and there were no specific prevention measures applied to the PAME process.	SEAH Non-Compliant

What Was Done Well in SEAH Safeguarding

- JNCC has a safeguarding policy that applies to all its activities, but it was not widely known at the time of the assessment.

How Future PAME Assessments Can Improve SEAH Compliance (Step-by-Step Progression Model) (table 14)

The table below outlines recommendations that can be implemented in future PAME assessments to improve SEAH compliance progressively.

Table 14 Recommendations to improve SEAH compliance for future PAME assessments

Phase	Recommended Actions for SEAH Compliance in Future PAME Projects
Phase 1: Immediate Action	Conduct a SEAH risk assessment before engagement activities.
	Implement confidential SEAH reporting mechanisms for stakeholders.
	Ensure all assessment teams complete SEAH training before engaging with communities.
Phase 2: Strengthening Compliance	Require all facilitators involved in PAME engagement to complete SEAH awareness training. Share information about SEAH safeguarding commitments with community members who are part of the engagement.
	Introduce SEAH-free participation guidelines in stakeholder engagement materials.
	Develop structured SEAH complaint-handling procedures, with independent SEAH review mechanisms.
	Establish clear enforcement mechanisms for SEAH violations.
	Implement anonymous SEAH reporting mechanisms to increase accessibility.
Phase 3: Full Compliance	Embed SEAH policies within internal processes for completing PAME assessments.
	Conduct annual SEAH compliance audits for all PAME-related activities.
	Develop an independent SEAH oversight body responsible for monitoring and responding to SEAH incidents.
	Institutionalise mandatory SEAH awareness sessions as part of stakeholder engagement practices.

Assign a SEAH focal point for each PAME engagement to handle complaints and ensure accountability.
--

Best Practices from Stakeholder Consultation-Based Projects

Example 1: The Philippines' Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park Governance Framework (Philippines, 1999-Present)

The Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park (TRNP) in the Philippines, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, has developed a multi-stakeholder governance approach to ensure that MPA management is both ecologically effective and socially inclusive. The TRNP Management Board includes representatives from local governments, fisherfolk associations, the tourism sector, and environmental NGOs, ensuring that decision-making reflects the interests of diverse stakeholders. To enhance GESI integration, the park introduced leadership training for fisherwomen, community youth engagement programs, and economic incentives for women-led conservation initiatives. Additionally, SEAH measures were institutionalized through formal codes of conduct for enforcement officers, complaint-handling mechanisms, and mandatory SEAH awareness training for all stakeholders involved in MPA management. TRNP serves as a model for how participatory governance in MPAs can be structured to balance ecological sustainability with social equity.

Example 2: Kenya's Community-Led MPA Management in Kuruwitu (Kenya, 2006-Present)

The Kuruwitu Conservation and Welfare Association (KCWA) in Kenya has successfully pioneered community-led MPA management by empowering local fisher cooperatives and women's marine resource groups to co-manage Kuruwitu Marine Conservancy. The initiative started in response to overfishing concerns and has grown into a globally recognized model for integrated coastal conservation and social development. GESI integration is a central feature, with women-led seaweed farming collectives and youth-run eco-tourism initiatives providing sustainable income sources for local communities. To ensure SEAH compliance, KCWA implemented community-based safeguarding mechanisms, grievance redress systems, and awareness campaigns to prevent harassment and exploitation within marine resource governance. This project highlights how locally-driven conservation initiatives can institutionalize inclusivity and safeguarding measures while achieving ecological and social sustainability.

6. Comprehensive Assessment of the Stakeholder Engagement

The Stakeholder Engagement Strategy is distinct from the other OCPP projects as it is a policy and best practice development initiative rather than an event-based intervention. The strategy aims to institutionalize stakeholder participation in marine conservation governance, ensuring that decision-making is inclusive, participatory, and

sustainable. While the draft strategy acknowledges the importance of engaging diverse stakeholder groups, it currently lacks a formal framework for gender-responsive engagement, SEAH safeguarding mechanisms, and disaggregated data tracking. This presents an opportunity to enhance GESI integration before finalization by embedding accountability measures, strengthening partnerships with local governance institutions (such as WDCs), and ensuring SEAH protections in all stakeholder engagement processes.

GESI Compliance Assessment for the Stakeholder Engagement Strategy

Table below outlines GESI compliance level of the Stakeholder engagement Strategy based on the assessment.

Table 15 Summary of GESI compliance assessment for the Stakeholder Engagement Strategy

Framework Component	Current Status in the Stakeholder Engagement Strategy	Assessment Level
Analysis and Design	The strategy promotes early stakeholder mapping to identify marginalised groups and engagement barriers. However, there is no structured gender and social inclusion analysis required before engagement begins.	GESI Sensitive
Stakeholder Engagement	The strategy encourages culturally appropriate engagement methods, such as translation services, trusted community leaders, and flexible engagement formats. However, it does not mandate specific representation requirements for underrepresented groups.	GESI Sensitive
Monitoring & Evaluation	The guidance suggests tracking engagement through surveys and feedback mechanisms, but does not explicitly require disaggregated data collection (gender, age, disability, etc.) to assess participation and impact.	GESI Sensitive
Team Capacity	There is no requirement for a dedicated GESI focal point or GESI training for those responsible for stakeholder engagement.	GESI Unaware

What Was Done Well in GESI Integration

- Encourages stakeholder mapping to identify marginalised groups and their barriers to engagement.
- Promotes culturally appropriate engagement methods, such as translation services, trusted community leaders, and alternative communication methods.
- Acknowledges societal norms that may discourage participation and proposes solutions to counteract them.
- Suggests smaller focus groups and anonymous feedback mechanisms to ensure that dominant voices do not overshadow marginalised groups.

The table below outlines the amendments to the Stakeholder Engagement Strategy that will help strengthen GESI considerations of the policy document.

Table 16 Recommendations to Improve GESI Integration in Stakeholder Engagement

Progression Level	Recommended Actions for Strengthening GESI in Stakeholder Engagement Strategy
Achieving GESI Sensitive	Clearly define GESI and its importance in stakeholder engagement within the Introduction. Include a commitment statement ensuring all engagements adopt GESI-sensitive practices.
	Emphasize gender-sensitive facilitation techniques, such as diverse facilitators, gender-balanced discussion panels, and mixed-gender breakout sessions in the Engagement Principles.

	Ensure early identification of historically underrepresented groups using targeted outreach strategies in Stakeholder Mapping.
	Strengthen culturally and linguistically inclusive communication by mandating the use of translation services and accessible materials (e.g., large-print documents, audio translations) in Communication Strategies.
Achieving GESI Empowering	Ensure psychological safety measures by incorporating trauma-informed engagement approaches and anonymous feedback channels in Safe and Inclusive Participation.
	Require qualitative data collection alongside quantitative metrics to capture the lived experiences of marginalized groups in Data and Monitoring.
	Require at least 40% representation of women, fisher groups, and marginalized communities in stakeholder consultations.
	Institutionalize a formal consultation process for underrepresented groups before finalizing stakeholder engagement recommendations.
Achieving GESI Transformation	Develop specific GESI-focused indicators to track inclusivity and community benefits in stakeholder engagement processes.
	Introduce skill-building and leadership training for marginalized groups to transition from consultation participants to decision-makers.
	Ensure that engagement processes are inclusive and safe by incorporating multiple formats (in-person, online, informal consultations, safe consultation venues, and timings).
	Ensure all future stakeholder engagement frameworks integrate GESI systematically.
	Advocate for national-level policy reforms that embed gender-sensitive governance in stakeholder engagement processes.
	Institutionalize GESI-responsive budgeting to ensure financial support for participation and benefit-sharing for marginalized communities.
	Include best practices and case studies showcasing GESI integration and SEAH compliance.

SEAH Compliance Assessment for the Stakeholder Engagement Strategy

Table below outlines SEAH compliance level of the Stakeholder engagement Strategy based on the assessment.

Table 167 Assessment of SEAH compliance for the Stakeholder Engagement Strategy

Framework Component	Current Status in the Stakeholder Engagement Strategy	Assessment Level
SEAH Risk Identification and Mitigation	SEAH is not explicitly addressed in the draft, but general principles of respect, confidentiality, and cultural sensitivity are included.	SEAH Non-Compliant
SEAH Reporting Mechanisms	The strategy does not establish formal SEAH reporting procedures for stakeholders.	SEAH Non-Compliant
SEAH Training & Awareness	The strategy does not require training for those responsible for stakeholder engagement to recognise SEAH risks and safeguarding measures.	SEAH Non-Compliant
SEAH Governance & Accountability	No formal SEAH oversight mechanisms or prevention measures are outlined.	SEAH Non-Compliant

The table below proposes amendments to the Stakeholder Engagement Strategy that will help strengthen SEAH Compliance of the policy document.

Table 18: Proposed Actions to Strengthen SEAH Compliance in Stakeholder Engagement

Phase	Proposed Actions
Phase 1: Immediate Action	Integrate a SEAH Risk Assessment into the engagement framework to identify potential risks before activities take place.
	Establish Confidential SEAH Reporting Mechanisms to ensure accessibility and anonymity for stakeholders.
	Require SEAH Training for Engagement Teams to be completed before facilitators engage with communities.
Phase 2: Strengthening Compliance	Mandate SEAH Awareness Training for all facilitators involved in stakeholder engagement. Ensure stakeholders are informed about SEAH safeguarding commitments.
	Develop SEAH-Free Participation Guidelines and incorporate them into stakeholder engagement materials.
	Establish Structured SEAH Complaint-Handling Procedures with an independent SEAH review mechanism.
	Strengthen Enforcement Mechanisms for SEAH Violations to ensure accountability.
	Implement Anonymous SEAH Reporting Mechanisms to improve accessibility and safety for reporting incidents.
Phase 3: Full Compliance	Integrate SEAH Policies within internal processes to ensure all stakeholder engagement activities comply with SEAH standards.

	Conduct Annual SEAH Compliance Audits to assess adherence to SEAH protocols in stakeholder engagement.
	Develop an Independent SEAH Oversight Body to monitor and respond to SEAH incidents.
	Institutionalize Mandatory SEAH Awareness Sessions as part of all stakeholder engagement processes.
	Assign a SEAH Focal Point for each engagement to handle complaints, provide guidance, and ensure accountability.

Best Practices from Policy and Stakeholder Engagement Initiatives

Example 1: Tanzania’s Women’s Empowerment in Coastal Governance Program (2021-Present)

The Tanzania Women’s Empowerment in Coastal Governance Program, implemented by The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and Tanzania’s Ministry of Fisheries, has successfully institutionalized GESI-sensitive and SEAH-compliant stakeholder engagement through local governance institutions. This initiative integrates local women’s councils and village governance committees into marine conservation decision-making.

The program ensures that women-led local councils are actively engaged in marine resource management, particularly in co-management of MPAs and sustainable fisheries governance. Through structured stakeholder engagement frameworks, the initiative mandates that every community conservation consultation must include Women’s Development Councils (WDCs) and fisher cooperatives, ensuring that decision-making processes are inclusive and reflective of local priorities.

To address SEAH risks, the program has implemented mandatory SEAH training for all stakeholders involved in marine governance, including local council members, fisheries enforcement officers, and conservation NGOs. A confidential SEAH reporting system has been established within local governance structures to handle complaints at the village and district levels.

This program demonstrates how leveraging existing local governance institutions, such as Women’s Development Committees and local councils, ensures that stakeholder engagement is not only inclusive but also embedded into long-term conservation governance frameworks.

Example 2: Canada's Integrated Marine Spatial Planning Approach
Canada has adopted an Integrated Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) Strategy to institutionalize stakeholder engagement in ocean governance. The approach involves multi-sectoral stakeholder platforms where government agencies, indigenous groups, fisheries organizations, local businesses, and environmental NGOs collaborate on marine conservation and resource use policies. One of the key features of this model is the co-design of marine management policies, where communities are not just consulted but given active decision-making power. To ensure GESI considerations are mainstreamed, Canada's MSP strategy requires gender-disaggregated data collection, leadership training for underrepresented groups, and inclusive consultation mechanisms that consider barriers such as language, financial constraints, and accessibility. Additionally, Canada has strict SEAH safeguarding requirements, including mandatory ethics training for marine conservation stakeholders and transparent SEAH response frameworks. This example illustrates how institutionalized stakeholder engagement can enhance equity, accountability, and long-term sustainability in marine conservation.

7. Recommendations for OCPP Workshop-Based Engagements

Strengthening GESI Considerations in Workshops

- A. Workshop Planning: Conduct a pre-event gender and social inclusion analysis to inform participant selection, agenda-setting, and facilitation styles.
- B. Participant Representation: Ensure at least 40% representation of grassroots and community leaders, including fisher groups, women leaders, and persons with disabilities where applicable.
- C. Facilitation Approaches: Use gender-sensitive facilitation techniques, such as interactive formats, gender-balanced panels, and structured engagement strategies to amplify the voices of underrepresented groups.
- D. Accessibility Considerations: Select venues that are accessible for persons with disabilities, ensuring physical accessibility to venue, accessible toilets, and workshop materials available in multiple formats** (e.g., large print, digital, translations for non-English speakers and elderly participants).
- E. Workshop Timing: Schedule workshops at times that accommodate caregiving responsibilities, including weekends or flexible hours.
- F. Childcare Support: Provide onsite childcare services or financial support to enable women with caregiving responsibilities to attend workshops.

G. GESI Training: Provide basic GESI training for facilitators and moderators to ensure inclusive engagement.

H. Institutionalisation & Policy Advocacy:

- Establish a permanent GESI advisory group to guide workshop planning.
- Develop specific GESI-focused discussion sessions in all workshop agendas.
- Implement policies requiring workshop series to systematically integrate GESI.
- Advocate for policy shifts to embed GESI-sensitive conservation governance.
- Ensure GESI is institutionalised within regional and national conservation agreements.

I. Monitoring & Evaluation: Track not just gender-disaggregated attendance data, but also qualitative participation metrics, such as who speaks the most, whose views influence outcomes, and what barriers remain.

Strengthening SEAH Compliance in Workshops

A. Pre-Workshop SEAH Risk Management:

- Conduct a SEAH risk assessment before planning.
- Establish a written SEAH policy aligned with international safeguarding standards.
- Develop and implement SEAH-free participation guidelines in event documentation.

B. SEAH Reporting & Complaint Handling:

- Implement confidential reporting channels for SEAH incidents.
- Develop structured complaint-handling procedures that prioritise survivor safety and confidentiality.
- Establish clear enforcement mechanisms for SEAH violations.

C. Mandatory SEAH Training & Awareness:

- Require 100% of facilitators to complete SEAH awareness training (which can be online and required before the workshop) and share the SEAH safeguarding documents with participants.
- Conduct SEAH training for all facilitators and organisers to ensure a safe workshop environment.
- Institutionalise mandatory SEAH awareness sessions during all workshops.

D. Independent SEAH Oversight & Compliance:

- Conduct annual SEAH compliance audits to assess effectiveness.
- Develop an independent SEAH oversight body or assign a dedicated SEAH focal point for each event.
- Ensure SEAH policies are fully embedded into workshop governance structures.

8. Recommendations for OCPP to Achieve GESI-Sensitive, Empowering, and Transformative Integration

This framework integrates intersectionality into OCPP's Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) strategy by recognising the diverse and overlapping vulnerabilities that affect different groups in the Maldives. These vulnerabilities include women (particularly those facing gender-based violence and economic marginalisation), persons with disabilities, elderly populations, youth, rural communities, migrant workers, and individuals in precarious employment.

Phase 1: Achieving GESI-Sensitive Level

Objective: Ensure OCPP projects acknowledge and begin to address the social, economic, and cultural barriers faced by marginalised groups, preventing exclusion and discrimination.

Key Actions for OCPP to Achieve GESI-Sensitive Level

Conduct a Structured Gender and Social Inclusion Analysis

- Implement community vulnerability mapping that considers gender, disability, rural-urban disparities, and socio-economic inequalities.
- Collect disaggregated data (by gender, age, disability, socio-economic background, and employment type) to identify multiple layers of exclusion.
- Recognise the compounded challenges faced by groups such as women with disabilities, elderly women, migrant workers, fisherwomen, and single mothers.

Strengthen Stakeholder Representation

- Ensure that consultations actively include vulnerable groups, such as women in atolls, persons with disabilities, elderly community members, and young people in rural areas.

- Implement culturally appropriate engagement methods to ensure accessibility for persons with disabilities and those with limited literacy.
- Address language barriers by translating all project-related materials and SEAH policies into Dhivehi and other relevant languages.

Build Team Awareness and Capacity on GESI

- Provide basic GESI and disability inclusion training to all OCPP project teams and partners.
- Assign a GESI and Disability Focal Point to ensure project activities are inclusive of persons with disabilities, elderly, and women from rural communities.
- Develop awareness materials in accessible formats (e.g., audio guides for visually impaired persons, sign language interpretation for key events, and simplified guides for individuals with low literacy).

Establish Initial Safeguards Against SEAH

- Implement safe and anonymous reporting mechanisms for SEAH cases, ensuring accessibility for persons with disabilities, migrant workers, and women in atoll communities.
- Require all project staff, including contractors, to complete SEAH training.
- Translate all SEAH-related documents into Dhivehi and ensure digital accessibility for visually impaired persons.

Introduce GESI-Sensitive Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E)

- Track participation rates of women, disabled persons, rural communities, and other vulnerable groups.
- Measure not just participation, but also whether marginalised groups influence decision-making.
- Ensure that all evaluation processes include perspectives from socially excluded groups, such as single mothers, elderly women, and those engaged in informal work.

Phase 2: Progressing to GESI-Empowering Level

Objective: Move beyond basic inclusion to actively removing barriers and promoting leadership opportunities for marginalised communities.

Key Actions for OCPP to Achieve GESI-Empowering Level

Institutionalise GESI Policies and Accountability

- Develop an OCPP GESI Policy that includes affirmative action for underrepresented groups.
- Mandate that all project partners commit to GESI principles, ensuring compliance through independent GESI audits.
- Strengthen SEAH policies by embedding accountability mechanisms for all contractors and implementing organisations.

Expand Participation and Decision-Making Roles for Marginalised Groups

- Establish leadership quotas for women, fisher communities, and persons with disabilities in marine conservation governance.
- Develop mentorship and leadership training programmes for young women, youth in rural areas, and fisherwomen.
- Ensure that decision-making bodies include representatives from atolls, elderly persons, and disabled advocates.

Strengthen SEAH Prevention and Response

- Implement survivor-centred response mechanisms, ensuring confidentiality, legal support, and trauma-informed services.
- Provide targeted SEAH training for groups at heightened risk, including migrant workers, young women, and persons with disabilities.
- Ensure anonymous reporting mechanisms are accessible both online and in person, particularly in isolated atoll communities.

Enhance GESI-Responsive Budgeting

- Allocate dedicated funding for female-led economic initiatives, skills training for disabled persons, and inclusive fisheries and tourism projects.
- Ensure disability-inclusive budgeting, prioritising investments in accessible transport, infrastructure, and communication tools.

Strengthen GESI-Integrated Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E)

- Move beyond participation metrics to assess whether underrepresented groups are benefiting from OCPP projects.
- Develop GESI impact scorecards to track economic inclusion, political participation, and social mobility of vulnerable groups.

Phase 3: Achieving GESI-Transformative Level

Objective: Embed GESI into governance, funding, and policy structures to ensure long-term systemic change.

Key Actions for OCPP to Achieve GESI-Transformative Level

Institutionalise Structural Reforms for GESI in Marine Conservation

- Advocate for GESI-sensitive policy reforms in national marine conservation frameworks.
- Ensure long-term, government-backed funding for GESI programmes.
- Institutionalise gender-responsive budgeting within environmental and marine conservation policies.

Strengthen Power Redistribution and Leadership Inclusion

- Establish permanent leadership roles for women, youth, and fisher communities in marine resource governance.
- Develop a national mentorship and leadership pipeline for marginalised communities in conservation.

Institutionalise Long-Term SEAH Governance

- Ensure that all SEAH policies, including reporting and response mechanisms, are permanently embedded in governance structures.
- Develop independent oversight bodies for handling SEAH cases.
- Require all SEAH policies, training, and response frameworks to be fully translated and available in accessible formats.

Advance GESI-Sensitive Policies Beyond OCPP

- Use OCPP's progress as a model for national and international best practices in gender-responsive environmental governance.
- Advocate for gender-sensitive conservation policies at regional and global levels.

Measure and Institutionalise GESI Impact

- Conduct longitudinal studies to assess whether economic opportunities, leadership roles, and protection mechanisms for vulnerable groups are sustained.
- Institutionalise GESI-sensitive impact assessments as a requirement for all future marine conservation funding.

Final Roadmap for OCPP GESI Integration

Based on the four case studies table 18 summarises key milestones for all OCPP projects to work towards strengthening GESI considerations.

Table 17 Final roadmap for OCPP GESI integration

Stage	Key Characteristics	Milestones to Achieve
GESI-Sensitive	Acknowledging barriers and ensuring basic inclusion.	- Conduct intersectional vulnerability mapping.
		- Train staff on GESI and disability inclusion.
		- Introduce SEAH reporting mechanisms.
		- Translate SEAH materials into Dhivehi and ensure accessibility.
		- Establish basic GESI-sensitive monitoring.
GESI-Empowering	Removing barriers and promoting leadership.	- Develop and enforce GESI policies.
		- Introduce quotas for marginalised representation.
		- Strengthen SEAH response mechanisms.
		- Institutionalise GESI-responsive budgeting.
		- Expand leadership development for youth, women, and fisher communities.
GESI-Transformative	Embedding GESI within governance, funding, and policy structures.	- Institutionalise long-term funding for GESI.
		- Establish leadership pipelines for marginalised communities.

		- Ensure national policy reforms integrate GESI.
		- Conduct systemic GESI and SEAH impact assessments.
		- Ensure SEAH policies are translated and widely disseminated.

Integrating SEAH Compliance into OCPP’s Progressive SEAH Compliance Framework

To ensure OCPP projects uphold the highest standards of safeguarding, SEAH (Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment) compliance must go beyond risk identification and mitigation— it is recommended that all OCPP-funded projects meet, monitor, and maintain safeguarding standards through clear policies, accountability mechanisms, survivor-centred reporting, and enforcement measures.

Phase 1: Achieving basic Compliance Level

Objective: Ensure OCPP projects acknowledge SEAH risks and begin implementing basic safeguarding measures, ensuring a safe and inclusive project environment.

Key SEAH Compliance Actions for OCPP to Achieve GESI-Sensitive Level

Establish Clear SEAH Policies and Codes of Conduct

- Support all OCPP-funded projects and partners to adopt a written SEAH Policy, aligned with international safeguarding standards.
- Develop sector-specific SEAH codes of conduct for marine conservation workers, community facilitators, and field teams.
- Ensure mandatory sign-off on SEAH policies for all employees, consultants, and contractors before engaging in project activities.

Implement Basic SEAH Risk Identification and Prevention Measures

- Conduct SEAH risk assessments at the start of each project, identifying potential power imbalances, isolated work environments, and vulnerabilities in local engagement processes.

- Establish gender-balanced teams and safeguarding officers in field projects to reduce SEAH risks.
- Ensure that project environments (workshops, field sites, partner meetings) are structured to prevent SEAH risks, including no unsupervised interactions between staff and vulnerable individuals.

Develop SEAH Reporting Mechanisms That Are Safe, Confidential, and Accessible

- Introduce multiple confidential reporting channels, including:
 - Anonymous digital reporting platforms
 - SEAH focal points within projects and partner organisations
 - Phone-based hotlines with trained SEAH responders
 - Community-based reporting mechanisms (in partnership with trusted local leaders)
- Ensure SEAH reporting mechanisms are available in Dhivehi and other relevant languages, with accessible formats for persons with disabilities.

Provide Basic SEAH Awareness Training

- Train all OCPP project staff, partners, and community facilitators on SEAH prevention and response.
- Ensure SEAH training is mandatory for all stakeholders engaging with marginalised groups, such as women in atolls, migrant workers, fisher communities, and persons with disabilities.
- Integrate basic SEAH awareness modules into community engagement workshops, marine governance meetings, and training programmes.

Phase 2: Progressing to Empowering SEAH Mitigation Level

Objective: Move beyond basic compliance by ensuring that SEAH policies are fully enforced, reporting mechanisms are functional, and accountability structures are in place.

Key SEAH Compliance Actions for OCPP to Achieve GESI-Empowering Level

Strengthen SEAH Governance, Monitoring, and Accountability

- Develop an independent SEAH oversight committee within OCPP to review SEAH cases and ensure policy enforcement.

- Conduct regular SEAH audits and spot-checks to assess compliance across projects.
- Require all implementing partners to submit periodic SEAH compliance reports, detailing safeguarding training completion rates, reported incidents, and mitigation efforts.

Introduce Survivor-Centred SEAH Response Mechanisms

- Ensure all SEAH complaints are handled using a survivor-centred approach, prioritising:
 - Confidentiality and anonymity for complainants
 - Trauma-informed response and psychological support
 - Protection against retaliation for individuals reporting SEAH cases
- Establish formal partnerships with local gender-based violence service providers to ensure survivors receive legal assistance, medical care, and psychosocial support.
- Implement alternative reporting mechanisms for communities with limited digital access, such as:
 - Safe spaces for in-person reporting
 - Dedicated female-led reporting teams for atoll communities

Scale Up SEAH Training and Awareness Campaigns

- Require annual SEAH refresher training for all OCPP staff and partners.
- Develop sector-specific SEAH training tailored to:
 - Marine conservation workers and researchers
 - Local fisheries management and community representatives
 - Tourism sector employees engaged in conservation projects
- Introduce SEAH-free workplace policies, ensuring that all OCPP-funded projects prohibit inappropriate conduct and enforce penalties for violations.

Strengthen SEAH-Responsive Budgeting

- Allocate funding for survivor support services, ensuring access to legal aid, medical care, and mental health resources for individuals affected by SEAH.
- Require all OCPP-funded projects to dedicate budget lines for SEAH prevention (e.g., for safeguarding staff, awareness materials, and compliance audits).

Phase 3: Achieving Transformative SEAH Mitigation Level

Objective: Embed SEAH safeguarding principles into the core governance, policy, and financial structures of OCPP, ensuring long-term systemic change.

Key SEAH Compliance Actions for OCPP to Achieve GESI-Transformative Level

Institutionalise SEAH Compliance as a Core Requirement for OCPP Projects

- Mandate that SEAH compliance is a prerequisite for all funding, partnerships, and project approvals.
- Establish a permanent SEAH policy review committee to ensure ongoing updates to safeguarding measures.
- Require external SEAH audits for all high-risk projects, particularly those engaging with vulnerable populations in remote atoll communities.

Strengthen Legal and Policy Frameworks for SEAH Prevention

- Advocate for policy reforms at the national level, ensuring that marine conservation governance integrates strong SEAH safeguarding policies.
- Partner with government agencies and NGOs to strengthen national SEAH response frameworks, law enforcement cooperation, and survivor protection laws.
- Ensure that SEAH violations result in appropriate consequences, including termination of contracts and legal action where applicable.

Scale Up SEAH Training and Public Awareness Campaigns

- Integrate SEAH awareness into national conservation strategies, community engagement initiatives, and environmental governance policies.
- Develop large-scale SEAH campaigns to educate coastal communities, fisher groups, and conservation professionals on their rights and protections.
- Ensure SEAH-free spaces in all OCPP project locations, with visible safeguarding materials, reporting posters, and trained focal points available.

Advance SEAH Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting

- Institutionalise annual SEAH impact assessments, measuring progress on safeguarding, reporting effectiveness, and survivor support outcomes.
- Conduct independent reviews of SEAH compliance in all OCPP programmes, ensuring that safeguarding measures are continually improved.
- Publish annual SEAH compliance reports, promoting transparency and accountability in OCPP’s safeguarding commitments.

Final Roadmap for SEAH Compliance in OCPP Projects

Based on the four case studies table 18 summarises key milestones for all OCPP projects to work towards becoming SEAH compliant.

Table 18 Final roadmap for SEAH compliance in OCPP projects

Stage	Key Characteristics	Milestones to Achieve
SEAH Compliance	Recognising SEAH risks and implementing basic safeguarding measures.	- Develop SEAH policies and codes of conduct.
		- Introduce SEAH reporting mechanisms.
		- Conduct basic SEAH training for all staff and partners.
		- Ensure all SEAH policies are translated into Dhivehi and accessible formats.
Empowering SEAH Mitigation	Strengthening SEAH governance, accountability, and survivor support systems.	- Establish an independent SEAH oversight body.
		- Scale up SEAH training and audits.
		- Implement survivor-centred response mechanisms.
		- Allocate SEAH-responsive budgeting for training and survivor support.

Transformative SEAH Mitigation	Embedding SEAH safeguarding into governance, policy, and finance structures.	- Institutionalise SEAH compliance as a core requirement for all projects.
		- Strengthen legal and policy frameworks for SEAH prevention.
		- Conduct external SEAH audits for all high-risk projects.
		- Ensure SEAH-free spaces and transparent reporting in all OCPP initiatives.

9. References

CARE. (n.d.). GESI Framework: Gender Equality and Social Inclusion. Retrieved from [CARE International Website]

FCDO. (2023). UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office Systems Change Pillar. Retrieved from [FCDO Official Publications]

OECD-DAC. (2023). Intersectionality and Inclusion in Development Practices: Guidelines for Implementation. Retrieved from [OECD Publications]

UN Women. (2023). Gender Mainstreaming Approach: A Global Standard for Integrating Gender Perspectives in Development Projects. Retrieved from [UN Women Publications]

World Bank. (2023). Gender Equality Strategy (2023–2030): Bridging Gaps and Promoting Inclusion in Economic and Social Sectors. Retrieved from [World Bank Reports]

HRBA. (2022). Human Rights-Based Approach: Framework for Integrating Rights and Inclusion into Policy and Practice. Retrieved from [Human Rights Commission Reports]

10. Annex

10.1 GESI Questionnaire

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) and Sexual Exploitation Abuse and Harassment (SEAH) Implementation Assessment

NOTES:

- Questionnaire on how organisations implement GESI principles and practices in their work with communities, including their approaches to mainstreaming gender equality and social inclusion across programmes and activities.
- The questionnaire is intended to be both an investigative and pedagogical tool, serving the dual purpose of data collection and participant learning
- interview will take approximately 20-30 minutes

Section 1: Analysis and Design

Was a gender and social analysis conducted during the project's planning phase?

1. Yes
2. No

Were specific vulnerabilities (e.g., gender, rural communities, disability, youth, elderly, foreign migrant workers, and SEAH risks) identified in project design?

1. Yes
2. No

Does the project action plan include clear GESI and SEAH goals with allocated resources?

1. Yes
2. No

Section 2: Target Groups and Engagement

Who are your main target beneficiaries? (Select all that apply)

1. Women
2. Rural communities

3. Youth
4. Elderly
5. Persons with disabilities (PWDs)
6. Foreign migrant workers
7. Other marginalized groups

How do you ensure the inclusion of marginalized groups in your activities?
(Open-ended response)

What specific approaches do you use to ensure(Open-ended response):

1. Women's participation
2. Inclusion of rural communities
3. Engagement of youth
4. Participation of elderly individuals
5. Inclusion of persons with disabilities (PWDs)
6. Inclusion of foreign migrant workers

What percentage of consultation participants are from these target groups (e.g., women, rural communities, youth, elderly, PWDs, foreign migrant workers)?

1. None
2. 0–25%
3. 26–50%
4. 51–75%
5. 76–100%

To what extent do these target groups influence project decision-making?

1. Not at all
2. Low
3. Moderate
4. High

Section 3: SEAH Safeguards

Are SEAH prevention mechanisms (e.g., reporting systems, codes of conduct) in place and operational?

1. Yes
2. No

Are SEAH risks and reporting mechanisms clearly communicated to stakeholders and communities?

1. Yes
2. No

Section 4: Monitoring and Evaluation

Are gender-sensitive and inclusion-specific metrics part of the project's monitoring framework?

1. Yes
2. No

Have there been observable changes in community attitudes or practices related to gender equality and inclusion as a result of the project?

1. None
2. Some
3. Significant

Have any policies or practices been adopted as a result of the project to enhance gender equality and inclusion?

1. Yes
2. No

10.2 Rationale for the GESI and SEAH Assessment Questionnaire

The GESI and SEAH Assessment Questionnaire is designed to evaluate how effectively projects integrate Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) and Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (SEAH) considerations across their life cycle. The structure and content are rooted in key indicators that align with the unique socio-cultural and economic context of the Maldives, ensuring actionable insights for fostering inclusivity, resilience, and safeguarding. Additionally, the questionnaire aligns with Ocean Country Partnership Programme (OCP) GESI mainstreaming requirements, supporting projects in progressing from GESI Unaware to GESI Transformative.

The questionnaire is designed to be GESI Transformative, adding indicators that address systemic inequalities, fosters cultural shifts, and sustains long-term inclusion. This GESI Transformative level elevates projects beyond compliance, embedding systemic change and empowering marginalized groups as leaders of their development.

Section 1: Analysis and Design

Justification:

This section evaluates whether projects intentionally integrate GESI and SEAH considerations during the planning phase and applies this to the design of activities. Identifying systemic barriers and allocating resources ensures that project interventions are proactive and preventive.

Key Indicators Addressed:

1. Gender and Social Inclusion Analysis:
 - Assesses the extent to which systemic barriers (e.g., gender norms, poverty, disability) are identified.
 - Provides a foundation for addressing SEAH risks in project design.
2. Vulnerabilities and SEAH Risks:
 - Identifies the inclusion of intersecting vulnerabilities (e.g., rural communities, migrant workers) as a focus area.
 - Ensures SEAH risks are prioritized to prevent harm.
3. Resource Allocation:
 - Evaluates whether projects allocate financial and human resources for GESI and SEAH interventions.

Alignment with OCP Levels:

- GESI Unaware: No social and gender analysis is conducted, risking reinforcement of inequalities.
- GESI Sensitive: Basic analysis ensures interventions "do no harm" and identifies SEAH risks.
- GESI Empowering: Comprehensive analysis promotes equality in access and resource allocation.

Rationale:

Integrating these indicators ensures that projects adopt a rights-based approach, addressing systemic inequalities and safeguarding marginalized groups early in the project lifecycle.

Section 2: Target Groups and Engagement

Justification:

This section measures the inclusivity and representation of marginalized groups (e.g., women, rural communities, at risk youth? youth, elderly, PWDs, foreign migrant workers) in project activities. It assesses the breadth and depth of engagement and captures qualitative and quantitative insights.

Key Indicators Addressed:

1. Target Beneficiaries:

- Tracks which marginalized groups are prioritized in project activities.
- Aligns with intersectional approaches to address overlapping vulnerabilities.

2. Inclusivity Strategies:

- Evaluates specific methods used to ensure participation and inclusion across diverse groups.
- Captures qualitative insights into the effectiveness of participatory approaches.

3. Consultation Metrics:

- Measures the inclusion of marginalized groups in consultations.
- Identifies which marginalized groups are represented during consultations.
- Assesses the degree of influence marginalized groups have on decision-making processes.

Alignment with OCPP Levels:

- GESI Unaware: Projects fail to consult marginalized groups.

- GESI Sensitive: Includes consultations with marginalized groups but limits influence as they are not include in the design and planning stages.
- GESI Empowering: Promotes leadership and decision-making power among marginalized groups through inclusion in design and planning stages.

Rationale:

Meaningful engagement ensures that project outcomes are equitable and inclusive. This section ensures that projects are representative of the communities they serve while addressing barriers to participation.

Section 3: SEAH Safeguards

Justification:

This section assesses the presence, accessibility, and operationalization of SEAH prevention and response mechanisms, which are central to creating safe project environments.

Key Indicators Addressed:

1. SEAH Prevention Mechanisms:
 - Evaluates whether mechanisms like reporting systems and codes of conduct are in place and operational.
 - Assesses the implementation of SEAH safeguards.
2. Communication of SEAH Risks:
 - Measures whether SEAH risks and safeguarding procedures are clearly communicated to stakeholders and communities.

Alignment with OCPP Levels:

- Non-Compliant: SEAH risks are unaddressed, and reporting channels are absent.
- Partially Compliant: Some SEAH safeguards exist, but gaps remain in implementation, such as limited reporting mechanisms, inconsistent training coverage, or lack of survivor-centered responses.
- Compliant: Safeguarding risks are identified, and reporting channels are accessible.

Rationale:

These indicators ensure that safeguarding mechanisms are accessible, survivor-centered, and effectively communicated, aligning with OCPP compliant requirements.

Section 4: Monitoring and Evaluation

Justification:

This section evaluates the effectiveness of project interventions in achieving GESI and SEAH objectives and tracks progress toward systemic and cultural changes.

Key Indicators Addressed:

1. Monitoring Frameworks:

- Ensures gender-sensitive and inclusion-specific metrics are integrated into monitoring systems.
- Tracks project outcomes against established GESI goals.

2. Community Attitudes:

- Measures observable shifts in community perceptions of gender equality and inclusion.
- Assesses the extent to which projects influence norms and attitudes.

3. Adoption of Policies:

- Captures whether project interventions result in institutional changes that enhance gender equality and inclusion.

Alignment with OCPP Levels:

- GESI Unaware: No metrics or data disaggregation to track interventions' impacts.
- GESI Sensitive: Logframes include disaggregated data to track outcomes.
- GESI Empowering: Tracks systemic change through qualitative and quantitative methods.

Rationale:

By tracking both immediate impacts and long-term systemic changes, this section provides actionable insights into the effectiveness of GESI and SEAH interventions.

Section 5: Indicators for GESI Transformative

Justification:

The GESI Transformative level goes beyond addressing immediate needs by institutionalizing inclusive practices, fostering cultural shifts, and empowering marginalized groups. It targets systemic change for long-term sustainability.

Key Indicators Addressed:

1. Systemic Change:

- Evidence of institutionalizing inclusive policies and practices in project design and implementation.
- Integration of GESI-specific accountability measures into governance structures.

2. Cultural Norm Shifts:

- Observable changes in community perceptions and behaviors toward gender roles and inclusion.
- Increased acceptance of marginalized groups in leadership and decision-making roles.

3. Empowerment:

- Tracks the inclusion of women and marginalized groups in leadership roles.
- Monitors the establishment of new leadership opportunities for marginalized groups.
- Identifies the expansion of economic opportunities provided to marginalized groups (e.g., access to jobs, training, or resources).

4. Resource Redistribution:

- Reduction in unpaid care burdens through systemic infrastructure changes (e.g., childcare, eldercare).
- Equitable distribution of project benefits across marginalized communities.

5. Capacity for Sustained Change:

- Establishment of community-led mechanisms to monitor and promote GESI and SEAH compliance.
- Long-term partnerships with civil society organizations (CSOs) to sustain inclusion efforts.

10.3 Global Standards informing GESI Transformative Indicators:

UK FCDO's Systems Change Pillar: Focus on dismantling systemic barriers for sustained inclusivity.

CARE's GESI Framework: Emphasis on transforming structures and relationships.

OECD-DAC's Intersectionality Lens: Addressing overlapping vulnerabilities.

UN Women's Gender Mainstreaming Approach: Ensures integration at all stages of policy and program development.

World Bank's Gender Equality Strategy (2023–2030): Narrowing gender gaps in leadership and economic participation.

Triple R Framework: Recognize, Reduce, and Redistribute unpaid care burdens.

Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA): Embeds participation, accountability, and empowerment principles.

The addition of GESI Transformative indicators elevates the assessment tool to address root causes of inequality and systemic barriers, ensuring projects contribute to long-term, sustainable change. By aligning with global best practices and tailoring to the Maldives' context, this comprehensive framework ensures that projects are inclusive, equitable, and transformative.

10.3 Indicators for GESI and SEAH Assessment

This list presents measurable indicators for assessing GESI and SEAH integration across individual projects, structured into key sections.

Analysis and Design Indicators

- Presence of a gender and social inclusion analysis conducted during the project planning phase.
- Identification of systemic barriers (e.g., gender norms, poverty, disability) in project design.
- Assessment of specific vulnerabilities, including rural communities, women, at-risk youth, PWDs, and migrant workers.
- Inclusion of SEAH risks in the project's risk management plan.
- Tracks whether a specific portion of the budget is allocated for GESI and SEAH interventions.
- Identifies the presence of a dedicated budget line or resources for GESI and SEAH activities.
- Number of staff/resources assigned to address GESI and SEAH issues.

Target Groups and Engagement Indicators

- Tracks the inclusion of marginalized groups (e.g., women, rural communities, at-risk youth, elderly, PWDs, migrant workers) as project beneficiaries.
- Identifies whether marginalized groups are actively participating in project consultations.
- Lists the specific marginalized groups included in project activities and consultations.
- Strategies implemented to reduce barriers to participation (e.g., language, accessibility, physical accommodations).
- Proportion of decision-making roles held by marginalized groups.
- Degree of influence marginalized groups have on project decisions.

SEAH Safeguards Indicators

- Presence of operational SEAH prevention mechanisms, such as reporting systems and codes of conduct.

- Communication of SEAH risks and reporting mechanisms to stakeholders and communities.
- Number of SEAH incidents reported and resolved within the project timeframe.
- Training provided to staff and community members on SEAH prevention and response.
- Frequency and effectiveness of updates to SEAH mechanisms and monitoring processes.

Monitoring and Evaluation Indicators

- Integration of gender-sensitive and inclusion-specific metrics into project monitoring frameworks.
- Proportion of communities reporting positive changes in attitudes toward gender equality and inclusion.
- Number of policies or practices implemented to enhance GESI and SEAH as a result of the project.
- Usage of disaggregated data (e.g., by gender, age, disability) for project evaluations.
- Proportion of projects producing evaluation reports with a focus on GESI and SEAH outcomes.

GESI Transformative Indicators

- Evidence of institutionalized inclusive policies and practices promoted by the project.
- Presence of GESI-specific accountability measures embedded in governance structures.
- Tracks evidence of changes in community perceptions of gender roles and inclusion.
- Monitors qualitative feedback or documented observations on shifts in attitudes toward gender equality and inclusion.
- Increase in leadership roles held by marginalized groups as a result of the project.
- Expansion of economic opportunities for marginalized groups through project activities.
- Reduction in unpaid care burdens through infrastructure or systemic changes (e.g., childcare, eldercare services).

- Establishment of community-led mechanisms for monitoring GESI and SEAH compliance.
- Number of partnerships formed with local organizations to sustain GESI and SEAH efforts post-project.

11.1 Types of Indicators and What They Measure

From the comprehensive list of GESI and SEAH indicators, the indicators can be classified into different types based on their focus and measurement objectives. Here's an analysis of the types of indicators and what they measure:

Input Indicators

Definition: Measure the resources, tools, or activities invested to support GESI and SEAH integration.

- Presence of a gender and social inclusion analysis conducted during project planning.
- Allocation of a defined budget amount for GESI and SEAH interventions.
- Number of staff/resources assigned to address GESI and SEAH issues.
- Presence of operational SEAH prevention mechanisms (e.g., reporting systems, codes of conduct).
- Number of strategies implemented to reduce barriers to participation.

What They Measure:

- **Commitment:** The extent of project investment in GESI and SEAH activities.
- **Preparedness:** Availability of tools, systems, and mechanisms to ensure inclusivity and safeguarding.

Output Indicators

Definition: Measure the immediate results or deliverables from GESI and SEAH-related activities.

- Inclusion of marginalized groups (e.g., women, rural communities, at-risk youth, PWDs, migrant workers) among project beneficiaries.
- Representation of marginalized groups in project consultations.
- Number of SEAH incidents reported and resolved during the project timeframe.
- Communication and awareness of SEAH risks and reporting mechanisms among stakeholders.
- Training provided to staff and community members on SEAH prevention and response.

What They Measure:

- **Inclusivity:** Representation and participation of marginalized groups in project activities.
- **Safeguarding Effectiveness:** Functionality and reach of SEAH prevention mechanisms.

Outcome Indicators

Definition: Measure the short- to medium-term changes resulting from GESI and SEAH integration.

- Influence of marginalized groups on project decisions (e.g., representation in decision-making processes).
- Evidence of positive changes in community attitudes toward gender equality and inclusion.
- Number of policies or practices implemented to enhance GESI and SEAH integration.
- Increase in leadership roles or opportunities held by marginalized groups.

What They Measure:

- **Behavioral Change:** Shifts in community attitudes or practices related to gender equality and inclusion.
- **Empowerment:** Improved leadership, representation, and decision-making influence of marginalized groups.

Impact Indicators

Definition: Measure the long-term and systemic changes influenced by the project's GESI and SEAH initiatives.

- Evidence of institutionalized inclusive policies and practices.
- Presence of GESI-specific accountability measures embedded in governance structures.
- Reduction in unpaid care burdens through infrastructure or systemic changes (e.g., childcare, eldercare services).
- Establishment of community-led mechanisms for monitoring GESI and SEAH compliance.

What They Measure:

- **Systemic Change:** Institutionalization of GESI and SEAH practices within governance and policies.
- **Cultural Norm Shifts:** Long-term changes in societal attitudes toward marginalized groups.
- **Sustainability:** Capacity for continuous monitoring and promotion of GESI and SEAH compliance.

Process Indicators

Definition: Measure the extent to which processes, strategies, and methodologies are effectively implemented.

- Frequency of updates to SEAH mechanisms and monitoring processes.
- Use of participatory methods to include marginalized groups in project planning.
- Usage of disaggregated data (e.g., by gender, age, disability) for project evaluations.

What They Measure:

- **Quality of Implementation:** Effectiveness of participatory processes and methodologies.
- **Data-Driven Decision-Making:** Integration of evidence-based approaches into project monitoring and evaluation.

Summary of Types and Their Focus

Type	Focus	What They Measure
Input Indicators	Resources, tools, and systems	Commitment and preparedness for GESI and SEAH integration
Output Indicators	Deliverables and immediate results	Inclusivity, representation, and safeguarding effectiveness
Outcome Indicators	Short- to medium-term changes	Behavioral change, empowerment, and decision-making influence

Impact Indicators	Long-term and systemic changes	Institutionalization, cultural norm shifts, and sustainability
Process Indicators	Strategies and implementation quality	Quality of participatory approaches, updates to processes, and use of data for decision-making

11.6 Key Questions and Indicators for the JEA Framework and Assessment

GESI Assessment Questions and Indicators

These questions aim to evaluate the project's integration of Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) principles.

Analysis and Design

Key Questions:

- Was a gender and social analysis conducted during the project's planning phase?
- Were specific vulnerabilities (e.g., gender, disability, youth, rural communities, foreign migrant workers) identified?
- Does the project action plan include clear GESI goals with allocated resources?
- Were GESI-specific policies or strategies applied in project design?

Indicators:

- Presence of a documented gender and social analysis in project planning.
- Identification of systemic barriers (e.g., gender norms, poverty, disability) in project design.
- Allocation of budget and staff resources for GESI-related actions.
- Number of GESI-responsive policies or strategies embedded in the project framework.

Stakeholder Engagement

Key Questions:

- Who are the primary beneficiaries of the project? (e.g., women, youth, elderly, persons with disabilities, migrant workers)
- How are marginalised groups identified and included in project activities?
- What strategies are used to ensure their meaningful participation in decision-making?

- Are there quotas or targets for representation of women and underrepresented groups?

Indicators:

- Percentage of women, youth, and marginalised groups participating in project activities.
- Number of consultation sessions involving marginalised groups.
- Existence of formal mechanisms (e.g., advisory committees) to support the engagement of marginalised groups.
- Percentage of decision-making roles held by marginalised stakeholders.

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

Key Questions:

- Are GESI-specific metrics included in project monitoring?
- Is data disaggregated by gender, age, disability, and socio-economic status?
- Has the project resulted in observable shifts in inclusion or gender-sensitive practices?
- Have policies been introduced to enhance GESI integration?

Indicators:

- Number of gender-sensitive indicators tracked in project reporting.
- Proportion of project reports that include disaggregated data.
- Number of documented policy changes that enhance GESI integration.
- Percentage of project evaluations that assess qualitative and quantitative GESI impacts.

Team Capacity

Key Questions:

- Does the project team include dedicated GESI expertise?
- Have staff and stakeholders received GESI-specific training?
- Are there clear internal policies to promote gender-sensitive practices?

Indicators:

- Number of staff trained in GESI principles.
- Percentage of projects with a dedicated GESI officer.
- Existence of institutional guidelines on GESI integration.
- Budget allocation for ongoing GESI training and capacity building.

SEAH Compliance Questions and Indicators

These questions assess the project's adherence to Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (SEAH) prevention and response mechanisms.

SEAH Risk Identification and Mitigation

Key Questions:

- Were SEAH risks assessed during project design?
- Are clear SEAH prevention measures in place?
- Were stakeholders informed about SEAH risks and provided safe mechanisms for engagement?

Indicators:

- Existence of a formal SEAH risk assessment.
- Inclusion of SEAH risk mitigation in project planning documents.
- Percentage of stakeholders aware of SEAH policies and reporting mechanisms.

SEAH Reporting Mechanisms

Key Questions:

- Are there confidential, survivor-centred reporting mechanisms available to all stakeholders?
- Are community members and staff aware of how to report SEAH concerns?
- Are reports of SEAH incidents monitored and acted upon?

Indicators:

- Number of documented SEAH complaints handled effectively.
- Presence of anonymous SEAH reporting channels.

- Percentage of stakeholders who report confidence in SEAH safeguarding mechanisms.

SEAH Training and Awareness

Key Questions:

- Have staff, project facilitators, and stakeholders received SEAH training?
- Are there mandatory SEAH awareness sessions for all stakeholders?
- Is SEAH training tailored to local and cultural contexts?

Indicators:

- Percentage of project personnel and stakeholders trained in SEAH prevention.
- Number of SEAH awareness sessions conducted.
- Presence of context-sensitive SEAH prevention materials (e.g., translated policies, visual aids).

SEAH Governance and Accountability

Key Questions:

- Are SEAH policies institutionalised within project governance?
- Is there independent oversight of SEAH compliance?
- Are SEAH violations addressed with clear consequences?

Indicators:

- Presence of documented SEAH policies.
- Existence of external SEAH oversight bodies for accountability.
- Number of SEAH cases formally investigated and resolved.

Final Summary of Key Indicators

Assessment Category	Indicators
GESI Analysis & Design	Gender and social analysis conducted, systemic barriers identified, GESI resources allocated
Stakeholder Engagement	Representation of marginalised groups, decision-making influence, consultation sessions conducted

Assessment Category	Indicators
Monitoring & Evaluation	Gender-sensitive indicators tracked, disaggregated data collected, policy shifts documented
Team Capacity	Staff trained in GESI, dedicated GESI officer, institutional GESI guidelines present
SEAH Risk Identification	SEAH risk assessments conducted, mitigation measures included in project plans
SEAH Reporting Mechanisms	Anonymous reporting channels available, stakeholders aware of SEAH procedures
SEAH Training & Awareness	SEAH prevention training provided, awareness sessions conducted, culturally relevant materials used
SEAH Governance & Accountability	SEAH policies institutionalised, independent oversight exists, SEAH violations addressed

11.6 Key Questions and Indicators for the JEA Framework and Assessment

Vulnerability Mapping

Definition:

Vulnerability mapping is a geospatial and demographic exercise that visually represents the geographic distribution of vulnerabilities within a given area. It identifies who is vulnerable, where they are located, and what socio-economic or environmental factors contribute to their vulnerability.

Purpose:

- To identify high-risk communities and regions prone to social, economic, and environmental vulnerabilities.
- To provide a visual representation of disparities in access to resources, economic opportunities, and decision-making processes.
- To prioritise project interventions in the most affected regions (e.g., atoll communities facing economic marginalisation, islands with high rates of gender-based violence, or areas with poor infrastructure for persons with disabilities).

Micro-Level Applications: Scaling Down to Island and Community Levels

While vulnerability mapping is often conducted at a national or regional level, it can also be scaled down to island and community levels to provide localised insights.

- **Island-Level Mapping:** Identifies specific islands where women face greater economic exclusion, persons with disabilities lack access to essential services, or fisher communities experience livelihood insecurity.
- **Community-Level Mapping:** Provides granular insights into neighbourhood-level disparities, such as which communities within an island have the least access to conservation decision-making or where SEAH risks are highest.

Example in OCPP Projects:

A vulnerability map could be created to identify which specific islands in the Maldives face the highest levels of gender-based economic exclusion, disability access issues, or SEAH risks.

Vulnerability Assessments

Definition:

A vulnerability assessment is a systematic analysis that examines why specific groups are vulnerable, what risks they face, and how these vulnerabilities can be mitigated.

Purpose:

- To assess the root causes of vulnerabilities, such as economic inequality, discrimination, environmental risks, and legal barriers.
- To analyse the intersectionality of vulnerabilities (e.g., how gender, disability, and geographic isolation interact to create compounded disadvantages).
- To inform policy and project design by identifying specific interventions needed to support marginalised groups.

Example in OCPP Projects:

A vulnerability assessment could examine why fisherwomen have limited access to marine conservation leadership roles, exploring barriers such as economic dependency, traditional gender roles, and lack of formal recognition in fisheries policies.

Independent Vulnerability Audits

Definition:

An independent vulnerability audit is an external review and verification process that assesses whether an organisation's policies, programmes, and operations effectively address vulnerabilities and uphold principles of inclusion, equity, and safeguarding.

Purpose:

- To provide an objective evaluation of how well an organisation is implementing GESI and SEAH principles.
- To identify gaps, risks, and unintended exclusions in project implementation.
- To ensure accountability by engaging independent auditors or evaluators to assess the effectiveness of inclusion measures.

Example in OCPP Projects:

An independent vulnerability audit could evaluate whether OCPP-funded marine conservation projects have truly integrated gender-sensitive approaches by reviewing participation data, interviewing marginalised stakeholders, and assessing SEAH risk mitigation measures.

SEAH Risk Assessments

Definition:

A SEAH (Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment) Risk Assessment is a structured process to identify, analyse, and mitigate risks of SEAH occurring within a project, organisation, or community engagement setting. It evaluates potential power imbalances, high-risk environments, and safeguarding weaknesses that could expose individuals to sexual exploitation, abuse, or harassment.

Purpose:

- To proactively identify SEAH risks within OCPP projects and ensure prevention strategies are in place.
- To assess whether reporting mechanisms are effective and accessible, particularly for women, youth, persons with disabilities, and migrant workers.
- To establish clear safeguarding protocols and ensure accountability mechanisms are in place for SEAH prevention and response.

Key Components of a SEAH Risk Assessment:

Context Analysis:

- Understanding power dynamics within the project environment.
- Identifying vulnerable groups who may be at higher risk of SEAH (e.g., women working in isolated environments, youth, persons with disabilities, informal workers, or individuals dependent on project-related benefits).

Risk Identification:

- Assessing whether project locations, stakeholder interactions, or fieldwork environments create opportunities for SEAH incidents.
- Identifying existing policies and reporting mechanisms to determine if they are functional, well-communicated, and survivor-centred.

Mitigation Strategies:

- Establishing confidential SEAH reporting mechanisms that are accessible to all stakeholders.
- Conducting regular SEAH awareness training for staff, partners, and community members.
- Ensuring SEAH policies and reporting channels are translated into Dhivehi and accessible formats (e.g., for persons with disabilities).

Monitoring & Evaluation:

- Implementing periodic SEAH risk audits to ensure continued safeguarding compliance.
- Collecting anonymous feedback from stakeholders on SEAH awareness, training effectiveness, and reporting processes.

Example in OCPP Projects:

A SEAH risk assessment could be conducted before launching a marine conservation training programme, ensuring that:

- Women and young professionals in the sector are protected from exploitation or harassment.
- All participants are aware of their rights and reporting options.
- SEAH prevention measures are embedded in programme policies, with trained safeguarding officers available on-site.

GESI-Responsive Budgeting

Definition:

GESI-Responsive Budgeting (GRB) is a financial planning approach that ensures budget allocations address gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) priorities. It aims

to mainstream GESI considerations into funding decisions, ensuring that projects are adequately resourced to promote inclusion, prevent discrimination, and support vulnerable communities.

Purpose:

- To ensure dedicated financial resources for GESI initiatives, including women's leadership training, disability-inclusive projects, and SEAH prevention measures.
- To prevent marginalised groups from being underfunded, ensuring that inclusion policies are backed by real financial commitments.
- To enable long-term, sustainable GESI outcomes, ensuring that interventions are not one-time activities but rather systemic changes embedded in conservation and governance structures.

Example in OCPP Projects:

An OCPP project could integrate GESI-responsive budgeting by:

- Allocating funds for childcare services to enable women to participate in conservation training.
- Providing accessibility grants for persons with disabilities to attend workshops.
- Budgeting for SEAH survivor support services such as legal aid, medical assistance, and trauma counselling.

Survivor-Centred SEAH Response Mechanisms

Definition:

A Survivor-Centred Approach ensures that individuals who report or experience SEAH receive protection, confidentiality, and support without facing stigma, retaliation, or secondary trauma. This approach prioritises the well-being, dignity, and choices of survivors in SEAH reporting and response systems.

Purpose:

- To provide survivors with a safe, supportive environment where they can report SEAH incidents without fear of retaliation.

- To ensure that survivors have autonomy over their choices, including whether to pursue legal action, access mental health support, or seek workplace protections.
- To prevent secondary victimisation, where survivors are subjected to blame, scepticism, or coercion during the reporting process.

Key Components:

- Confidential and accessible reporting channels (e.g., anonymous hotlines, digital platforms, trained focal points).
- Trauma-informed case handling, ensuring survivors are listened to without pressure or judgement.
- Protection against retaliation, including whistleblower protections for those who report SEAH incidents.
- Referral pathways to legal, medical, and psychosocial support services.

Example in OCPP Projects:

A survivor-centred approach in SEAH compliance could include:

- Assigning female-led SEAH focal points in atoll communities for anonymous in-person reporting.
- Partnering with NGOs providing trauma-informed counselling for SEAH survivors.
- Implementing strict confidentiality policies, ensuring that only authorised personnel handle SEAH complaints.

Gender-Responsive Leadership Quotas

Definition:

A gender-responsive leadership quota is a policy that sets minimum representation targets for women and marginalised groups in decision-making roles, ensuring fair and equitable participation in governance, conservation, and environmental policymaking.

Purpose:

- To counteract historical and systemic exclusions that have prevented women, fisherwomen, disabled persons, and youth from participating in marine governance.
- To build capacity and leadership pathways for underrepresented groups in conservation, fisheries, and environmental policy.
- To ensure that decision-making processes reflect diverse perspectives, leading to more inclusive and sustainable environmental policies.

Example in OCPP Projects:

A gender-responsive leadership quota could be implemented in OCPP projects by:

- Ensuring that at least 40% of advisory council positions in marine governance are held by women and persons from marginalised communities.
- Creating leadership training pipelines for young women in fisheries and environmental management.
- Enforcing inclusion criteria for OCPP project leadership teams and partner organisations.

SEAH-Free Workplace Policies

Definition:

A SEAH-Free Workplace Policy is a set of regulations and behavioural guidelines designed to prevent sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment in the workplace, particularly in conservation, fieldwork, and community engagement settings.

Purpose:

- To ensure all staff, volunteers, and contractors adhere to safeguarding principles.
- To create work environments where employees and stakeholders feel safe, respected, and protected.
- To establish clear disciplinary actions for SEAH violations, ensuring zero tolerance for misconduct.

Key Components:

- Clear codes of conduct, prohibiting sexual misconduct and inappropriate behaviour.
- Mandatory SEAH training, ensuring all staff are aware of their rights and responsibilities.
- Anonymous reporting channels, enabling employees to report SEAH violations safely.
- Strict consequences for SEAH violations, including termination and legal action.

Example in OCPP Projects:

OCPP could enforce SEAH-Free Workplace Policies by:

- Requiring all project teams to sign SEAH Codes of Conduct before deployment.
- Setting up independent SEAH reporting mechanisms for staff and community members.
- Conducting SEAH compliance spot-checks in fieldwork locations to assess workplace safety.

GESI-Integrated Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E)

Definition:

GESI-Integrated M&E is a systematic approach to tracking project impact through gender equality and social inclusion indicators. It ensures that OCPP projects are not only inclusive in design but also in outcomes.

Purpose:

- To measure whether marginalised groups are genuinely benefiting from OCPP projects, not just participating.
- To assess the long-term impact of GESI interventions, such as whether women have gained leadership positions or whether SEAH risks have decreased.
- To provide data-driven insights for policy improvements, ensuring projects remain accountable and adaptive.

Key Components:

- Tracking disaggregated data (gender, disability, age, location, socio-economic status).
- Assessing qualitative outcomes, such as how inclusion policies have changed workplace cultures.
- Regularly consulting with marginalised groups, ensuring their voices shape project evaluations.

Example in OCPP Projects:

GESI-integrated M&E could track:

- Whether SEAH reporting systems are being used effectively and whether survivors feel supported.
- Whether women in fisher communities have gained economic opportunities through OCPP initiatives.
- Whether disability-inclusive conservation policies have improved access to marine resources for disabled persons.