



Ministry of Tourism and Environment
Republic of Maldives

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Consultancy Services to Conduct a Gender Equality, Disability & Social Inclusion Gap Assessments in Lhaviyani Atoll

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1. Introduction and Background

The Government of Maldives, with World Bank support and GEF financing, is preparing the Blue Capital for Prosperity and Climate Resilience (BCPCR) project to increase sustainable financing for and implementation of Nature-based Solutions (NbS), with a geographic focus on Lhaviyani (Faadhippolhu) Atoll. At the national level, the project will also scale up natural capital accounting and ecosystem services valuation to inform cross-sector decision-making.

The Maldivian economy relies heavily on its natural capital, which is increasingly threatened by climate change and exploitation. To address this, BCPCR Component 2 focuses operationally on Lhaviyani (Faadhippolhu) Atoll. This atoll was selected for its rich biodiversity and its potential to pilot innovative, inclusive governance models integrating communities, government, and the private sector.

As a pre-implementation work and in linkage with the subcomponent 2.2.1 of the project, there is importance for a understanding the Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) Aspects of the project's geographic scope. Hence, the need to conduct a GEDSI Gap Assessment. The GEDSI Gap Assessment directly supports Component 2 of the BCPCR project by identifying barriers and opportunities for gender equality, disability and social inclusion in resource management, protected area governance, and coastal/marine conservation. The assessment will also ensures that project interventions and protected area management plans are inclusive and equitable, with a broader focus on align with the project's objective of increasing sustainable financing and effective implementation of NbS.

2. Scope of Assignment

Withing this assignment, the consultant shall undertake a comprehensive GEDSI Gap Assessment and develop a GEDSI Action Plan, with mandatory integration of SEAH/Safeguarding requirements, focused to Lhaviynai Atoll as the project's defined geographic location and its communities.

Gender Equality, Disability & Social Inclusion (GEDSI) Gap Assessment:

The consultant shall assess the roles, contributions, and challenges faced by women, youth, and marginalized groups in the context of resource management and employ an intersectional and social vulnerability lens.

Under the assignment the consultant will be responsible for the following:

- Conduct primary and secondary data collection to generate sex-disaggregated and socially disaggregated data
- Application of all intersectional dimensions in disaggregation, including but not limited to: gender, age, disability status, geographical isolation/remote residency, and livelihood/socioeconomic status.
- Expanding sectorial coverage of intersectional data collection and analysis
- Identify and map the social vulnerability of marginalized groups (e.g., female-headed households, persons with disabilities, youth).

- Identify participation levels and decision-making roles of groups in ecosystem governance and livelihood activities.
- Determination of the group's disproportionate exposure to environmental/climate risks.
- Evaluate their differential access to local governing bodies, resources, and adaptive capacities.
- Assess stakeholders' (e.g., local councils, Women's Development Committees, NGOs) capacity and readiness to carry out GEDSI-responsive activities.
- Assessing existing institutional frameworks and policies for gender and social inclusion in environmental planning.
- Identifying structural and cultural barriers to equitable access, leadership, and benefit-sharing.
- Carry out a SEAH Risk and Vulnerability Assessment to identify sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment risks in the communities.
- Examine local SEAH/safeguarding reporting methods, both formal and informal, for safety, confidentiality, and survivor-centred alignment.

GEDSI Action Plan:

Based on the findings of the GEDSI Gap Assessment, the consultancy will develop a targeted action plan to mainstream gender and social inclusion across all stages of NbS implementation. Tasks include:

- Recommend transformative measures that address underlying power dynamics and structural barriers for GEDSI integration.
- Recommendations on capacity-building initiatives to strengthen leadership and technical skills among women, youth, and marginalized groups.
- Proposing governance mechanisms that promote equitable representation and decision-making.
- The action plan must include specific recommendations to develop or strengthen SEAH Prevention and Response Systems.
- Designing benefit-sharing strategies that address disparities in access to resources and project outcomes.
- Develop an M&E framework using GEDSI-responsive indicators and participatory monitoring approaches.

3. Objectives

The primary objective of this consultancy is to conduct a comprehensive GEDSI Gap Assessment in Lhaviyani Atoll to understand and integrate Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion dynamics into resource governance. The assessment must identify barriers, roles, and opportunities for marginalized groups to achieve more equitable and sustainable environmental outcomes. Its findings must ensure that project solutions do not harm vulnerable groups, harness diverse community knowledge, and offer recommendations that contribute to transforming power dynamics and promoting social justice. This ensures that conservation initiatives are inclusive, resilient, and strengthen the overall impact and sustainability of the BCPCR project.

4. Deliverables

The consultant is expected to deliver the following deliverables. The deliverables will be approved once the drafts are reviewed by BCPCR Project and MoTE, and once noted observations are addressed.

i. Inception Report: A document outlining the detailed workplan/schedule, finalized methodology, and Stakeholder Engagement Plan for the GEDSI Gap Assessment. This should include:

- GEDSI Gap Assessment Methodology: Outlines the approach for qualitative and quantitative data collection, sampling, and analysis to assess gender and social inclusion. Confirms methods for gathering sex- and socially disaggregated data and details the Risk Assessment plan.

Methodology Requirements

- Quantitative data collection
 - Confidence level: 90%
 - Margin of error: 7% for atoll-wide estimates; 5–10% acceptable for small islands, or census where feasible.
 - Stratification criteria relevant to GEDSI: gender, age cohort, disability status, household type, livelihood group, geographic isolation, socioeconomic status, and institutional participation.
- Qualitative data collection
 - Methods must include Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and at least 1 Focus Group Discussion (FGDs) per island. Participatory mapping and life histories are strongly encouraged.
 - Sampling must use purposive and snowball techniques for marginalized groups, with saturation criteria applied to determine final sample sizes.
 - Documentation must include anonymised verbatim transcripts, coding framework, and inter-coder reliability checks.
- Quality Assurance protocol
 - Findings must be triangulated across at least two independent sources (e.g., survey, interview, policy review).
- Stakeholder Mapping: Identification of key groups (women, youth, marginalized groups, local leaders, resource users, etc.) and engagement strategy.

Stakeholder Engagement and Feedback Plan

- Identification and prioritisation of key groups (women, youth, persons with disabilities, councils, NGOs, resource users, private sector actors).
- Engagement schedule shall be outlined with Structured calendar of consultations at midline validation (after preliminary findings), and final validation (before submission of final report).

- For accessibility measures the Activity must be conducted in close coordination with the island councils
- Stakeholder feedback must be documented within a week of engagement.
- Transparent integration mechanism such as maintaining a Stakeholder Feedback Log must be incorporated

ii. Desk Review Summary: A synthesis of existing information and literature, including:

- GEDSI Policy and Literature Review: Review of national and local policies, previous studies, and best practices related to GEDSI integration.
- Contextual Analysis: Summary of relevant demographic, and cultural factors influencing GEDSI, and existing formal or informal safeguarding policies.

iii. Field Data Collection & Stakeholder Engagement Report: A formal summary of consultation and communication with local communities, governing bodies, and resource users during atoll field data collection. This should include:

- GEDSI Interview and Focus Group Transcripts/Summaries: Documentation of qualitative data from KIIs and FGDs, ensuring the inclusion of marginalized groups for the Social Vulnerability and SEAH Risk Analysis.
- Participation Records: Evidence of inclusive engagement and feedback from diverse stakeholders.

iv. Draft Analytical & Assessment Report:

- Draft Assessment Report: Analyse data to pinpoint gaps and barriers to inclusion, covering the Social Vulnerability Profile and the SEAH Risk and Institutional Safeguarding Review.
- Draft GEDSI Action Plan: Sets measurable steps for integrating GEDSI, with actions to address power dynamics and SEAH prevention and response recommendations.

v. Final Assessment Reports & Documents:

- Final GEDSI Gap Assessment Report & Action Plan: Incorporating feedback from MoTE/PMU and stakeholders, reflecting all required changes. The Final Action Plan must include the mandatory SEAH/Safeguarding Action Plan and the GEDSI-responsive framework.
- Raw Data Repository: A consolidated, digital archive containing all primary, unedited field

5. Payment Schedule and Duration

The Consultant shall submit the Financial Proposal with the Expression of Interest. Remuneration will be released upon acceptance of deliverables as per the Payment Structure (Section 6). The Consultant is expected to deliver the full Scope of Assignment (Section 2) for final payment.

The total duration of this assignment is **one (1) calendar month** from the contract signing date. Applying individuals are required to submit a detailed, time-bound work plan and schedule as part of their technical proposal. This work plan structured below ensures a timely completion of all deliverables (1 through 5) within the one-month period.

No.	Description	Duration (days)	Payment Schedule
I	Inception Report GEDSI Gap Assessment Methodology Stakeholder Mapping	5	10%
II	Desk Review Summary GEDSI Policy and Literature Review Summary Contextual Analysis	5	10%
III	Field Data Collection & Stakeholder Engagement Report GEDSI Interview and Focus Group Transcripts/Summaries Participation Records	5	25%
IV	Draft GEDSI Gap Assessment Report Sub-component - Draft GEDSI Action Plan	5	25%
V	Final Assessment Reports & Documents Sub-component - Final GEDSI Action Plan Raw Data Repository	10	30%
Total		30	100%

6. Requirements for Experience and Qualifications

Minimum qualification:

- Minimum Master's degree in Gender Studies, Sociology, Anthropology, or a relevant social science discipline.
- Minimum 5 (five) years of work experience in conducting Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) Assessments and developing Action Plans for natural resource management or climate resilience projects. Additional years of experience will be evaluated with additional 2 (two) marks per year for a maximum of 3 years.
- Key Skill: Expertise in applying internationally recognized GEDSI methodologies (e.g., World Bank/GEF standards), conducting gender-segregated participatory tools (FGDs/KIIs), and analyzing institutional and socio-cultural barriers to equitable participation.
- Experience in donor funded projects will be an added advantage.

Additional Requirements:

- Submit CVs and signed commitment letters.
- All fieldwork/reporting must comply with safety standards and national data protocols.

PEP and Conflict of Interest Assessment:

In line with World Bank Anti-Corruption Guidelines and national procurement regulations, the key personnel is subject to PEP and conflict-of-interest screening prior to award. Shortlisted consultant shall disclose personnel details whereby, misrepresentation/omissions may result in disqualification.

7. Provision of Monitoring and Progress Controls

The Consultant will report directly to the BCPCR Project Management Unit (PMU) under the MoTE. Ministry of Tourism and Environment (MoTE) has overall responsibility for the management of the contract and contractual reporting obligations.

PMU and Partner Responsibilities:

- **Lead Coordination:** The BCPCR PMU will provide consolidated feedback and ensure alignment with World Bank and GEF requirements.
- **Technical Clearance:** Collaboration will be maintained with the Environment Regulatory Authority (ERA), relevant Ministries and Atoll/Island Councils for technical input and local clearance.
- **Resource Provision:** Provide necessary access, contacts, and existing spatial/baseline data.
- **Review Cycle:** Review all drafts and provide consolidated feedback.
- **Approvals:** Ensure processing of formal approvals and certification of deliverables by the MoTE/PMU. Payments shall be advanced for processing upon approval

Consultant Responsibilities:

- Coordinate with the project and any relevant government and non-government institutions during the consultation so that risks are identified, avoided, mitigated and managed throughout the assignment.
- Maintain open communication and proactively notify the PMU of any anticipated delays or scope changes.
- To be present in person for the Presentation of Reports
- Travel to assignment site for stakeholder engagement and data collection.
- Lead regular virtual or in-person progress meetings as per a schedule agreed with MoTE virtual.
- Provide required written progress reports, linked directly to the approved work plan.
- Submission of deliverables in a timely manner for feedback from MoTE.
- Incorporating feedback and submission of all finalized deliverables to MoTE for approval.

8. Quality Assurance and Deliverable Acceptance Criteria

All deliverables must meet the following mandatory acceptance criteria before formal sign-off and payment release. Formal acceptance requires written confirmation from the BCPCR PMU/ MoTE.

Acceptance Criterion	Description
Technical Rigor	All components must be methodologically sound, using robust data collection, statistical validation, and spatial analysis techniques as detailed in the Inception Report.

GEDSI	The GEDSI Gap Assessment must be comprehensive, and its findings must be demonstrably integrated into the specific actions defined in the GEDSI Action Plan.
Completeness	All components specified in the ToR must be addressed.
Clarity and Professionalism	Reports must be written in clear, concise, professional English, free of grammatical errors, and appropriately formatted for both technical and high-level policy-making audiences (MoTE, World Bank).
Client Review Cycle	The Consultant must submit revised deliverables within five (5) working days of receiving feedback.

Failure to meet these criteria will require revisions at the Consultant's expense until full compliance and formal acceptance by the BCPCR PMU and MoTE is achieved.

9. Evaluation Criteria

Selection Criteria	Weightage (%)	Document Evaluated
Achieved minimum qualification, experience required	40	Copies of Academic Certificates and Letter of experience submitted
Experience in Relevant field at local and national level in at least one project/programme	10	Letter of experience submitted
Experience in working with ministries or national institutions that are concerned in a related field (2 points for each year)	10	Letter of experience submitted
Interview	40	-

10. Additional Information

- Documents and data provided by the government for the purpose of this assessment which is not of public nature shall be considered confidential and should not be disclosed to any other party.
- All outputs and materials produced as part of this TOR shall be handed over to the BCPCR Project/MoTE at the end of the contract and will become the property of Ministry of Tourism and Environment.
- International and local transport costs and obtaining any necessary visa and documents are the responsibility of the proponent. Ministry of Tourism and Environment will only provide a visa facilitation letter if necessary.
- For meetings: BCPCR Project PMU will facilitate sending of invitations to stakeholders.
- For Workshops and Logistics: BCPCR Project PMU will facilitate sending of invitations to stakeholders for workshops and trainings. The provision of logistics, catering and venue where

required are the responsibility of the proponent and this cost should be included in the price quotation.

11. Application

Applications will be evaluated based on the supporting documents provided, not based on information provided on the CV. The applicants shall submit their applications along with the following documents:

- Curriculum Vitae (clearly stating the starting and ending month and year for previous experiences)
- Copy of National ID Card
- Accredited copies of Academic Certificates (Documents accepted are copy of accredited certificates/Letter of completion from the university together with a written document from Maldives Qualification Authority stating that the course completed is accredited to a certain level.)
- Employment Verification Letter from previous employer(s)
- Candidates currently working in the Civil Service should provide a letter of no objection from their current employer to release from the job.

Applications should be submitted to the Ministry of Tourism and Environment by email to bcpcr@environment.gov.mv by 13:00hrs, 30th November 2025.