



Ministry of Fisheries, Marine Resources and Agriculture

Male', Republic of Maldives

Title of Project: The Project for Promotion of Blue Economy in the Fisheries Sector in the Maldives

- **Location:** The capital city, Male and remote islands in the Maldives.
- **Project Duration:** Starting Date: April 2022. Completion Date: May 2025.
- **Implementing Agency:** Ministry of Fisheries, Marine Resources and Agriculture (MoFMRA).
- **Source of Funding:** Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).
- **Target Beneficiaries:** Fishermen.

Program Background (Project Summary)

The fisheries sector in the Maldives is an important industry, accounting for more than 90% of the country's total exports, and is expected to play a vital role in the recovery from the economic damage caused by COVID-19 as a source of foreign currency. On the other hand, tuna and skipjack tuna, the main catch of the Maldives, are being overfished in the Indian Ocean by European purse seiners and other vessels. In the future, the Maldives needs to add more value to its catch by improving quality and promoting secondary processing, without increasing the catch. To address this situation in the country's fisheries sector, JICA implemented a development survey-type technical cooperation project, "Project for the Formulation of Master Plan for Sustainable Fisheries in the Maldives" (MASPLAN) from 2014 to 2017, and supported to develop of a Fisheries Sector Development Plan, which identified strategies and approaches for the sustainable and efficient utilization of fishery resources and the necessary activities. As the outcome of this, the "Sustainable Fisheries Development Plan of the Important Sub-sectors in the Maldives 2016-2025 - Goals, Objectives and Projects-" (SFDPIS), which was submitted in August 2017, was formally approved by the Government in August 2019 as a policy document for the country. SFDPIS embodies the vision and strategy of the Blue Economy, which is one of the main policies of the Maldives Strategic Action Plan (SAP (2019-2023)). This project is positioned as a JICA technical cooperation project to implement the contents of this SFDPIS, based on the request of the Maldivian Government.

- **Purpose of the project:** Economic foundation of the fisheries sector in the Maldives is strengthened based on the blue economy principles and through the implementation of the Sustainable Fisheries Development Plan of the Important sub-sector in the Maldives SFDPIS.

- **Project Goal:** Resiliency & sustainability of the fisheries sector is improved through the implementation of the Sustainable Fisheries Development Plan of the Important sub-sector in the Maldives (SFDPIS)

Project Components:

- Trade competitiveness of sustainably produced key fishery products of oceanic fisheries are improved.
- Resource-efficient production methods are adopted in the live-bait fishery.
- Coping capacity of fishing communities against external changes is enhanced.

Project Activities:

Activities for Output 1

- To identify shortcomings of current practices of on-board fish handling and preservation in oceanic fisheries
- To develop a best practice guide for on-board fish handling and preservation (booklet and videos)
- To provide technical training on on-board fish handling and preservation for local fishers and government officials
- To monitor the effect of improved on-board fish handling and preservation
- To assess the potential market for key fishery products (domestic/overseas) and identify market requirements in product quality and packaging
- To provide technical assistance for local fish processors for sustainable trade and value addition to key fishery products
- To facilitate business to business linkages for the promotion of key fishery products

Activities for Output 2

- To conduct further improvement of on-board live-bait stocking system and facilitate its adoption to local fishing vessels
- To provide training on handling of bait fish for fishers
- To promote the use of improved facilities and equipment in harvest, transfer and stock of live-bait

- To assess the feasibility of converting live-bait fishery (currently as a component of pole-and-line fishery for skipjack tuna) to an independent fishery
- To identify necessary measures to assist the establishment of independent live-bait fishery
- To compile a review report on the feasibility of converting live-bait fishery to an independent fishery

Activities for Output 3

- To conduct a situation survey on selected fishing communities
- To conduct comparative analysis/household survey of the MASPLAN project for the impact assessment of COVID-19 on rural fishing communities
- To identify the issue and constraints of rural fishing communities in enhancing their economic resilience
- To formulate a mid to long-term plan of economic recovery of rural fishing communities
- To identify training needs for key players in local economy (e.g., fishing related entrepreneurs)
- To provide technical training and assistance for impacted local processors to transition into new production methods and markets
- To support key players to formulate the business proposals based on the economic recovery plan.

Progress of the Activities

<u>Output :01</u>	A pamphlet on measures to prevent scorching of yellowfin tuna on board fish handling was prepared. In mid-October 2022, Despite the fishing season of yellowfin Tuna, there were poor catches of yellowfin tuna due to unseasonable weather. This caused the scheduled video best practices guide filming to be carried over to February 2023 or later. Technical guidance of on-board fish processing was conducted four times. This training will be continued with feedback and improvements to the training content after the training is completed. The training is aimed at local fishermen and government officials. It was commenced in august 2022.
<u>Output :02</u>	Further improvement of the onboard live bait tank system and its application to local skipjack Tuna Fishing vessels started slightly earlier than as scheduled. Initially, the prototype of an improved live bait tank to be introduced to skipjack fishing vessels was to be made in Japan, but plans were changed and this will now be done in the Maldives. Currently, the project is working with the GFF (Guarantee Fiberglass Fabrication, an FRP processing and shipbuilding company) to design the prototype

	live bait tanks and to coordinate with cooperative skipjack tuna fishing vessels that will try out the improved live bait tank.
<u>Output :03</u>	The status survey in selected fishing communities started one month earlier than as scheduled. The project has been completed the surveys at four target island (Th. Hirilandhoo, Ha. Ihavandhoo, B. Thulhaadhoo and R. Maduvvari). The project has a plan on coordination with the resort hotel in the Output3. Thus, the project is trying to make collaborative relationship with the ministry of Tourism. To collaborate with the Ministry of tourisms activity, a survey of the target area, Meemu Atoll, is planned. The activities will continue after February 2023 to conduct the survey. Also, Impact assessment of COVID-19 in local fishing communities was conducted from oct 2022 and completed in December 2022

The expected outcome of the Project:

- Conduct activities focused on the dissemination of technology, using the knowledge gained from MASPLAN.
- Plan activities based on a bird's eye view of the entire fisheries value chain in the Maldives
- Plan and implement locally-led activities to strengthen the resilience of fishing communities through support to local authorities.
- Actively develop potential domestic consumer markets.
- Seamless linkage of each activity such as on-site training/technical assistance, training in Japan and the preparation of best practice guides.

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