

Feasibility Study on the Application of the IUCN Green List Standard in the Republic of Maldives

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST (EOI) (CONSULTANCY SERVICES)

1. Purpose: The Consultant(s) will assess the feasibility and desirability of adopting the IUCN Green List Standard on Protected and Conserved Areas in the Republic of Maldives. The assessment will include an overview of the status of protected and conserved areas in the Maldives, including their values, threats and management status, as well as their contribution towards the achievement of global goals and targets and the delivery of nature-based solutions. It will provide an analysis of the potential to use the IUCN Green List Standard to enhance the management and governance of protected and conserved areas in order to achieve successful conservation outcomes in Maldives. If the IUCN Green List is deemed to be feasible/desirable, the assessment will also put forward a set of strategic recommendations for adopting the Standard in the Maldives, including a roadmap which identifies major steps, timelines, and the suggested roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders.

2. Duration of Contract: Four months: 1 November 2021 - 28 February 2022

3. Deadline for Submission of EOIs: **Sunday 24 October 2021, 23:59 Indo-China Time**

4. Maximum Amount: 15,000 USD (to be justified with a detailed budget)

5. Background Information: Biodiversity plays a critical role in supporting the ecological, social and economic well-being of the Republic of Maldives, and in particular, the tourism and fisheries sectors. The coral reefs of the Maldives are the seventh largest in the world, and are of global conservation significance; they are also the foundations of the nation's economy, underpinning at least 89 per cent of Gross Domestic Product¹. According to the Maldives Visitor Survey conducted in 2019, 57 per cent of tourists to the islands cited "underwater beauty" as the main motivation for their visit. Similarly, in 2014, whale shark tourism in South Ari Marine Park generated over USD 9 million and attracted over 70,000 tourists.

However, the rich biodiversity of the Maldives is under threat from a growing range of development activities as well as climate change. To help address these concerns, the Government of Maldives is according increasing attention to its protected and conserved area system. As of June 2021, the country had 73 legally-recognised protected areas, covering some 55,693 ha. The Government's Strategic Action Plan aims to protect and manage at least 10 per cent of the country's coral reef area, 20 per cent of the nation's wetlands and mangroves, and at least one sandbank and one uninhabited island from each atoll by 2025. Priority is also being accorded to ensuring that protected areas generate economic benefits to communities; for example, ecotourism facilities are being developed and specific guidelines on benefit sharing are being prepared.

Despite these efforts, protected and conserved areas in the Maldives face many challenges, including insufficient human and financial resources. Only five protected areas are currently under active management. A majority of the Maldives' protected areas lack management

¹ Emerton L., Baig S., and Saleem M. (2009) Valuing Biodiversity. The economic case for biodiversity conservation in the Maldives. AEC Project, Ministry of Housing, Transport and Environment, Government of Maldives and UNDP Maldives.

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plans, and human use of most areas remains uncontrolled. To help address these concerns, the government is currently engaged in a process of reviewing and strengthening its protected area system, with a particular emphasis on ways of enhancing management effectiveness and governance.

The IUCN Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas (<https://iucngreenlist.org/>) could potentially be a valuable tool to support this process. The IUCN Green List is the first global standard of best practice for area-based conservation. It is a programme of certification that recognises protected and conserved areas - national parks, nature reserves, community conserved areas, etc – that are being effectively managed and fairly governed. The implementation of the Standard also requires a consideration of the landscape and/or seascape context, particularly regarding connectivity.

The principal objective of this consultancy, therefore, is to carry out a detailed assessment of the feasibility and desirability of adopting the IUCN Green List in the Maldives.

6. Specific Terms of Reference: The Consultant will carry out a detailed assessment of the relevance, feasibility and potential benefits/challenges of implementing the IUCN Green List Standard in the Maldives. The work will be carried out in close consultation with: the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Technology; the Environmental Protection Agency; the IUCN Maldives Office; the IUCN Asia Regional Office; and the IUCN Global Green List Team. Key considerations include:

Relevance

- How relevant/appropriate is the IUCN Green List Standard to the Maldivian context, and the particular management challenges faced by protected areas?
- Would there be a need to adapt the Standard in order to make it more relevant to key protected area issues and challenges in the Maldives? For example, might there be a need to strengthen the Standard's approach to climate change?

Feasibility

- How robust is the existing information base relative to the needs of the IUCN Green List Standard?
- Have there been any protected area management effectiveness assessments done at site or national levels? If so, what Management Effectiveness Evaluation (MEE) tools were used?
- Is there sufficient protected area capacity/expertise in the Republic of Maldives to provide the input required to implement the Green List, including the formation of an EAGL (Expert Assessment Group for the Green List)?
- How might experts and other stakeholders be motivated to participate in the implementation of the Standard? Might there be interest in having Site Mentors?
- Which organisations could potentially take on the role of Implementing Partner?

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Potential Benefits and Challenges

- What would the benefits and challenges of using the Standard in the Republic of Maldives be?
- Are there particular protected areas that would benefit more than others if they were to adopt the Standard?
- How could the IUCN Green List facilitate better engagement of a diversity of stakeholders, especially those dependent on and/or engaged in marine and coastal resource harvesting?
- What is the scope for using the Standard to promote greater integration and synergies between private and government-supported conservation initiatives?
- What is the scope for using the IUCN Green List to promote the adoption of technological solutions to help address conservation challenges and climate change threats in the Republic of Maldives?
- How could the IUCN Green List Standard be used to provide guidance and a measure of progress for management and conservation outcomes (from site to landscape/seascape-level)?
- What is the potential to use the IUCN Green List Standard as more than just a certification process for selected sites, but rather, to help design, guide, manage and plan the national system of protected and conserved areas in the Maldives? In particular, as a result of their size, complexity and rich diversity, the coral reefs of the Maldives are globally significant. How could the IUCN Green List help to provide opportunities for improved conservation of important local-to-global values (including Key Biodiversity Areas and potential natural World Heritage sites) through protected and conserved areas, including Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs) and Locally Managed Marine Areas (LMMAs)?

7. Activities: The suggested consultancy activities can be organised into the following steps:

Develop the assessment methodology

- Identify the key information sources to be reviewed and key stakeholders to be consulted; these must include the latest versions of the IUCN Green List Standard and User Manual;
- Prepare a brief methodology report, summarising the strategy and approach to be used in carrying out the assessment;
- Develop a Table of Contents and outline for the assessment report.

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Conduct desktop review and interviews

- Carry out a desktop review of the protected and conserved area system in the Maldives, in order to identify current status, values, threats, management challenges and opportunities;
- Conduct interviews with a wide range of representatives from national and local government, civil society, the private sector (particularly the tourism and fisheries sectors), academia, local communities and other stakeholders.

Develop a draft report

- Collate and analyse the information obtained;
- Map out the key opportunities with relevance to the four Components of the IUCN Green List Standard: Good Governance; Sound Design and Planning; Effective Management; and Successful Conservation Outcomes;
- Develop a first draft of the report based on the findings.

Organise a stakeholder consultation meeting

- Organise and facilitate a stakeholder consultation event, designed to: a) introduce the IUCN Green List Standard; and b) seek feedback on the first draft of the report.

Finalise the feasibility report

- Incorporate the comments and suggestions received from the stakeholder consultation and from IUCN into a final draft of the report;
- If the feasibility assessment is positive, the final report should include a roadmap for the adoption of the Green List Standard in the Republic of Maldives, identifying key steps, timelines, and the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders. If possible, the report should also identify a number of potential sites where the Green List Standard could be applied.

8. Deliverables and Suggested Timeline: The timetable for the delivery of outputs is as follows:

	Deliverable	Delivery Date
1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Brief methodology report, summarising the strategy and approach to be used, key information sources to be reviewed, key stakeholders to be consulted, etc;• Draft Table of Contents for the final report.	14 November 2021

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2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Draft feasibility report, including a map of key opportunities related to each of the four components of the Green List Standard.	16 January 2022
3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Consultative meeting with key stakeholders	6 February 2022
4.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Summary report of the stakeholder consultative meeting	13 February 2022
5.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Final feasibility report, incorporating feedback from the stakeholder meeting and IUCN, as well as a roadmap for implementing the IUCN Green List Standard in the Republic of Maldives (if deemed to be desirable/feasible)	28 February 2022

9. Desired Experience and Qualifications: *This consultancy is only open to Maldives nationals.* Preference will be given to individuals with the following educational and professional experience:

- Minimum of a master's degree in a relevant field;
- At least 10 years of professional experience in the Maldives: in-depth understanding of the Maldives context and an extensive professional network of government and civil society contacts;
- At least five years of proven professional and relevant experience related to conservation and protected areas, ideally in the Maldives; knowledge of marine/coral ecosystems would be of added value;
- Demonstrated ability to undertake independent research;
- Demonstrated ability to facilitate multi-stakeholder workshops, meetings and consultations;
- Ability to operate in a virtual context;
- Demonstrated excellence in written English;
- Knowledge of Protected Area Management Effectiveness (PAME) evaluation tools and/or certification processes (and ideally, the IUCN Green List Standard) would be an advantage.

10. Submissions: Send Expressions of Interest to the following:

Dr Scott Perkin
Head, Science and Strategy Group
IUCN Asia Regional Office
Email: scott.perkin@iucn.org

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Annex 1: Indicative Format for Expressions of Interest

Name of Individual/Institution	
Country	
Address	
Contact Email	
Required Skills and Experience (max 500 words) Please provide information demonstrating your ability, skills and experience to undertake the assignment in an efficient and effective manner. Please include a copy of your Curriculum Vitae (CV).	
Proposed Methodology and Approach (max 500 words) Please provide a summary of the proposed approach, including key partners and stakeholders to interview, key reports or documents to be reviewed and specific strategies for accessing information about protected areas in the Maldives.	
Proposed Budget Please provide an itemized budget, showing the breakdown of staff time, travel, and other anticipated expenses.	
Proposed Workplan Please provide a simple workplan, outlining the timing and duration of the activities to be undertaken during the process of developing the feasibility report.	