

DRAFT



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

Developing and implementing a
National Plan of Action for
Small-Scale Fisheries (NPOA-SSF)

MALDIVES (Marine Fisheries)

INCEPTION PHASE



Bay of Bengal Programme
Inter-Governmental Organization (BOBP-IGO)
2026

**Developing and implementing a National
Plan of Action for Small-Scale Fisheries
(NPOA-SSF)**

**MALDIVES
INCEPTION PHASE**

Working Document

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Stage 1 - NPOA-SSF initiation

Step 1-1: Task Force formation

The Voluntary Guidelines for Ensuring Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in Relation to Food Security and Poverty Alleviation (SSF Guidelines) serve as an international framework addressing the requirements of developing nations. They are relevant worldwide and for all types of small-scale fisheries as well as the entire small-scale fisheries value chain. They offer an extensive framework to steer the governance and development of small-scale fisheries, yet are inherently general and not specific in terms of actions at the national or local level: they suggest what should be accomplished, but not the methods to achieve it.

Chapter 13 of the SSF Guidelines highlights the necessity of facilitating implementation and monitoring. Therefore, to ease their execution, customized implementation plans specific to each country are necessary to pinpoint the strategies and priority measures to be adopted at the country level. A detailed implementation plan can be developed as a National Plan of Action for Small-Scale Fisheries (NPOA-SSF).

This report is the inception phase document for **MALDIVES**.

1. Role and Purpose¹

Small-scale fisheries are crucial for livelihoods, food systems and social resilience of communities throughout the Bay of Bengal Region. Despite their scale, these fisheries contribute significantly to national economies and regional food security. However, the sector remains uncharacterized and unrepresented in policy frameworks at the regional level. Strengthening the visibility and strategic positioning of SSF is essential to ensure inclusive and sustainable fisheries governance across the region.

In the Maldives, all fisheries are conducted on a small-scale basis, shaped by traditional practices and community-based operations. The fisheries sector plays a central role in supporting coastal livelihoods, contributing to food security, and sustaining socio-cultural values. Pursuant to the Fisheries Act of Maldives (Law No. 14/2019), regulatory frameworks have been instituted to ensure equitable and inclusive fisheries management through Fishery Management Plans. The Tuna Fishery Advisory Committee, established in 2025, serves as a precedent for similar committees under development for other fisheries. Due consideration is key in the integration and alignment of FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries into existing management frameworks, to enhance coherence and sustainability across current and future initiatives. In light of this context, the Government of

¹ This section is largely taken from: TERMS OF REFERENCE (ToR) National Task Force (NTF) for the Development of the National Plan of Action for Small-Scale Fisheries (NPOASSF) in Maldives. Ministry of Fisheries and Ocean Resources, Malé, Republic of Maldives.

Maldives acknowledges the need for a coherent and inclusive policy framework to guide the sustainable development and governance of the fisheries sector.

In line with the decisions taken at the Bay of Bengal Programme Inter-Governmental Organisation (BOBP-IGO), High-Level Meeting held in the Maldives in February 2025 under the Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem Phase II (BOBLME-II) project, and as endorsed by the Governing Council, the process of establishing a National Task Force (NTF) was initiated at the Regional Capacity Development Workshop on Development of NPOA-SSF and Preparation of National Roadmaps in September 2025, by BOBP-IGO. The establishment of the SSF Task Force is a strategic step towards developing the National Plan of Action for Small-Scale Fisheries (NPOA-SSF), aligning national priorities with regional commitments and international best practices.

1. Objective and Purpose

To lead the development of the National Plan of Action for Small-Scale Fisheries (NPOA-SSF) in the Maldives ensuring alignment with national priorities, regional commitments, and international best practices for sustainable and inclusive fisheries governance. The National Task Force (NTF) are established as a multistakeholder platform to coordinate the development, validation, and subsequent implementation of the NPOASSF, with consideration for the inclusive, equitable, and sustainable development of Small-Scale Fisheries in the Maldives.

2. Scope of Work

The SSF Task Force shall:

- Formulate the development plan of the NPOA-SSF.
- Lead the development of the NPOA-SSF.
- Conduct a comprehensive assessment of the current status of small-scale fisheries in the Maldives
- Facilitate inclusive stakeholder consultations, including fishers, community representatives, civil society, and relevant government agencies.
- Review and incorporate relevant regional and international frameworks, including the FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries
- Identify policy gaps, challenges, and opportunities within the sector.
- Draft the NPOA-SSF with clear objectives, strategic actions, and implementation mechanisms.
- Facilitate institutional arrangements for coordination, monitoring, and evaluation of the NPOA-SSF.

3. Expected Outputs

The NTF shall deliver the following key outputs:

- A validated National SSF Profile summarizing the socio-economic, ecological, and governance context
- A legal and policy diagnostic report identifying gaps and opportunities

- A national roadmap outlining actions, responsibilities, and timelines for NPOA-SSF implementation
- The draft National Action Plan for Small-scale fisheries (NPOA-SSF)
- A monitoring and evaluation framework with measurable indicators and reporting procedures
- Recommendations for resource mobilization and coordination with regional and international partners.

These ToR are effective from <18 November 2025> and continue until terminated by agreement between the parties.

2. Membership

The Task Force for **MALDIVES** is a stakeholder working group consisting of eight members

Table 1: NTF Membership²

S.No	Name
1	Dr. Hussain Sinan Designation: Director General Affiliation: Ministry of Fisheries and Ocean Resources Email: hussain.sinan@fisheries.gov.mv Mobile: +1 (902) 441 4167
2	Dr. Amzath Ahmed Designation: State Minister Affiliation: Ministry of Fisheries and Ocean Resources Email: amzath.ahmed@fisheries.gov.mv Mobile: +960 9820725
3	Ms. Munshidha Ibrahim Designation: Director Affiliation: Ministry of Fisheries and Ocean Resources Email: Munshidha.ibrahim@fisheries.gov.mv Mobile: +960 7835987
4	Ms. Hawwa Raufath Nizar Designation: Senior Statistical Officer Affiliation: Ministry of Fisheries and Ocean Resources Email: raufath.nizar@fisheries.gov.mv Mobile: +960 7782217
5	Ms. Maisa Abdul Wahid Designation: Legal Officer Affiliation: Ministry of Fisheries and Ocean Resources Email: maisa.wahid@fisheries.gov.mv Mobile: +960 9819608
6	Ms. Aishath Sarah Hashim Designation: Senior Research Officer Affiliation: Ministry of Fisheries and Ocean Resources

² ibid

S.No	Name
	Email: sarah.hashim@fisheries.gov.mv Mobile: +960 7651001
7	Mr. Nabeel Abdul Muhsin Designation: Assistant Marine Research Officer Affiliation: Maldives Marine Research Institute Email: nabeel.abdulmuhsin@mmri.gov.mv Mobile: +960 9489434
8	Mr. Samrath Hassan Designation: Fisherman Affiliation: Representing the Small-Scale Fisheries Community Email: Samrath.hassan@gmail.com

3. Roles and Responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities of the Task Force members are as follows:

(Note: it is preferable to establish the individual roles and responsibilities of each task force member. These could include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a) Chairperson
- b) Secretary/Treasurer
- c) Lead: Preliminary SSF Profile [Step 1-2]
- d) Lead: SSF Stakeholder Mapping [Step 1-3]
- e) Lead: SSF Governance Review & Gap Analysis [Step 1-4]
- f) Lead: Rationale for an NPOA-SSF and NPOA-SSF Development Plan [Steps 1-5 and 1-6])

Table 2: NTF – Members and their roles³

	Name of Member	Role
1	Dr. Hussain Sinan	NPOA Drafting
2	Dr. Amzath Ahmed	Governance review, Rationale for NPOA-SSF
3	Ms. Munshidha Ibrahim	NPOA-SSF Log frame
4	Ms. Hawwa Raufath Nizar	Stakeholder consultations, preparation of materials
5	Ms. Maisa Abdul Wahid	Legal drafting
6	Ms. Aishath Sarah Hashim	NPOA-SSF development plan
7	Mr. Nabeel Abdul Muhsin	Awareness building, preparing consultation materials
8	Mr. Samrath Hassan	Stakeholder mapping, identifying expectations of target stakeholders

³ ibid

4. Meetings

All meetings will be chaired by

A meeting quorum will be members of the Task Force.

Decisions will be made by consensus (that is, members must be satisfied with the decision even though it may not be their first choice). If this is not possible, the Task Force chairperson makes the final decision.

Meeting agendas and minutes will be provided by the

This task includes:

- preparing agendas and supporting papers; and
- preparing meeting notes and information.

Meetings will be held or as and when required

If required, subgroup meetings will be arranged outside of these times, at a time convenient to subgroup members.

Table 3: Contribution and Coordination⁴

Reference activity from roadmap	Who leads or coordinates	Who contributes
Stakeholder mapping and communication strategy plan	Munshidha Ibrahim, Director (MFOR) Workshop: Samrath Hassan, Fisherman	State Minister, Director, Legal Officer, Research Officers, Fisheries Rangers, Media Consultants (MFOR) NGO representative, Council Officers (Local councils)
Governance review, Rationale for NPOA-SSF	Dr. Amzath Ahmed, State Minister (MFOR) Workshop: Maisa Abdul Wahid, Legal Officer	Director, Legal Officer, Research Officer (MFOR)
NPOA-SSF development plan	Aishath Sarah Hashim, Research Officer (MFOR)	Legal Officer, Research Officers, Fisheries Rangers, Media Consultants (MFOR) Relevant government ministries (eg: Higher Education, Labor and

⁴ Based on presentation made at the Regional Inception Workshop on the National Plans of Action for Small-Scale Fisheries (NPOA-SSF) 20-22 Nov 2025, Colombo, Sri Lanka

Reference activity from roadmap	Who leads or coordinates	Who contributes
		skills, trade, environment) NGO representative, Council Officers (Local councils), Fishermen, Processors, Private Sector representative
Preparation for public launch of NPOA-SSF process	Media Consultant (MFOR) Workshop: Nashid Latheef, NGO representative	Director, Research Officer (MFOR), Council Officers (Local councils)
Public launch: Awareness building and understanding expectations of target stakeholders	Nabeel Abdul Muhsin, Research Officer (MFOR)	Media Consultant (MFOR), Council Officers (Local councils), Fishermen, Processors, Private Sector representative, Relevant government ministries (eg: Higher Education, Labor and skills, trade, environment) NGO representative
Intervention logic	Dr. Amzath Ahmed, State Minister	Dr. Hussain Sinan, Director General Munshidha Ibrahim, Director Hawwa Raufath Nizar, Director Maisa Abdul Wahid, Legal Officer Sarah Hashim, Research Officer
Preparation (question, materials) for consultations	Hawwa Raufath Nizar, Director	Sarah Hashim, Research Officer Nabeel Abdul Muhsin, Research Officer
NPOA-SSF Log frame	Munshidha Ibrahim, Director	Dr. Hussain Sinan, Director General

Reference activity from roadmap	Who leads or coordinates	Who contributes
		Hawwa Raufath Nizar, Director Maisa Abdul Wahid, Legal Officer Sarah Hashim, Research Officer
NPOA-SSF drafting	Dr. Hussain Sinan, Director General	Munshidha Ibrahim, Director Hawwa Raufath Nizar, Director Maisa Abdul Wahid, Legal Officer Sarah Hashim, Research Officer
Stakeholder consultations	Hawwa Raufath Nizar, Director	Sarah Hashim, Research Officer Nabeel Abdul Muhsin, Research Officer

Table 4: Meeting Schedule⁵

Meeting name	Objective	Who participates	Frequency/ date	Roles
Inception meeting	Clarifying roles, scope, planning	NTF members representative	Single meeting/20-22 Nov	Convener: Sarah Hashim Note-taker: Maisa Wahid
Strategy meeting	To identify next steps and way forward in engaging with stakeholders and development of the NPOA	All NTF members	Week 4 of December	Convener: Dr. Hussain Sinan Note-taker: Sarah Hashim

⁵ ibid

Meeting name	Objective	Who participates	Frequency/ date	Roles
Stakeholder mapping	To identify relevant stakeholders	Raufath Nizar, Sarah Hashim, Nabeel Abdul Muhsin, Nashid Latheef	Week 1 of January	Convener: Raufath Nizar Note-taker: Sarah Hashim
Stakeholder consultation preparation meeting	Prepare consultation materials, logistics to initiate engagements with stakeholders	Raufath Nizar, Sarah Hashim, Nabeel Abdul Muhsin, Nashid Latheef	Week 2 of February	Convener: Raufath Nizar Note-taker: Sarah Hashim
Communication strategy plan	Developing the communication strategy for developing the NPOA-SSF	Not filled in Colombo		
NPOA-SSF development plan	Developing plan for the activities that follow (eg: Process launch and awareness building NPOA-SSF, intervention logic Stakeholder consultation, etc.) till final publication of the NPOA-SSF		•	
Preparatory meeting for public launch	Preparation for public launch of NPOA-SSF process.			
Actual Launch	Media planning and event publicity Public launch event			

Meeting name	Objective	Who participates	Frequency/ date	Roles
Awareness building and understanding expectations of target stakeholders	Building awareness among stakeholders and document expectations of target stakeholders			

5. Amendment, modification or variation

These ToR may be amended, varied or modified in writing by Task Force members after consultation and agreement.

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Step 1-2: SSF Profile

This SSF profile informs the initiation of an NPOA-SSF. It is expected that this will be reviewed and further developed as part of the NPOA-SSF development. **The detailed SSF Profile for Maldives is available in as a stand-alone document.** Information presented in the following sections is extracted/ summarized from the document.

1. Definition of small-scale fisheries in MALDIVES⁶

The scale of the one-by-one tuna fisheries dominates that of the reef-based fisheries in the country. However, only looking at the national context as a basis for determining it as small-scale or not, disregards the perhaps more appropriate regional (Indian Ocean) context. Tuna catch from all types of tuna fisheries in the Maldives represents only a small proportion of the tuna caught in the Indian Ocean as a whole. Therefore, it is relevant and crucial to recognize the small-scale nature of the tuna fisheries in the Maldives within this broader context.

Reef fisheries in the Maldives exhibits the more “typical” characteristic associated with small-scale fisheries. It operates on a far smaller scale relative to the tuna fisheries, and is more fragmented from centralized fisheries management systems. It is mostly carried out for domestic consumption by locals and tourists. Although exports occur within the reef-based fisheries, it is, once again, on a much smaller scale compared to that of tuna fisheries, and is skewed toward certain species (or groups of species) such as groupers.

Table 5: Fishery Units and Challenges

S. No.	Fishery unit	Main Characteristics	Numbers	Key issues/challenges facing fishery unit
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				

⁶ ibid

2. Characteristics of small-scale fisheries in MALDIVES

Table 6: Characteristics of small-scale fisheries in MALDIVES

Small-scale fisheries in numbers		A small-scale fishery is defined as...
National population (number) 526,000	Employed in small-scale fisheries (percent of national population)	
	Fishers	Total
	17000	3.23%
	Male (%)	Female (%)
	ND	ND
Wetland or mangrove areas	Marine area/exclusive economic zone (km ²)	
8.01	859,000 sq. kms	
Average production (MT)	Contribution to GDP (percent)	
149000	6	
Key small-scale fisheries	Name of species and fisheries (with annual production totals in MT, to give an idea of relative scale) Skipjack tuna 129,200, Yellow fin tuna 21,800, Frigate tuna 4,400, Kawakawa 2,400, Groupers ~600, Snappers (part of ~16,700 reef fish)	

All fisheries in Maldives are considered small-scale.

3. Small-scale fisheries structure

Pole-and-line fishers mostly fish skip-jack tuna are predominantly small-scale, though some use larger mechanized vessels and active in most atolls. Handline fishers use handlines and droplines for reef and deepwater fish and are widespread across atolls being typically small-scale and artisanal. Other stakeholders in small-scale fisheries in the Maldives include crew members on dhonis, women involved in traditional processing of “hikimas” (smoke-dried tuna), local fish vendors, transporters, ice and fuel suppliers, and traders who collect and export dried or fresh tuna products.

4. Small-scale fisheries management

Fisheries are governed nationally by the Ministry of Fisheries and Ocean Resources with support from the Maldives Marine Research Institute (MMRI), while island councils manage local coordination; regionally, the country engages with bodies like IOTC. The Fisheries Act of the Maldives (Law No. 14/2019) is the principal legislation governing all fisheries, including small-scale, outlining licensing, management, monitoring, and sustainability provisions. In addition, there are eight specific fishery management plans.

5. Small-scale fisheries knowledge

The Maldives Marine Research Institute (MMRI) conducts fishery-based research for pelagic and reef-based fisheries. Fishery sampling programs are conducted throughout the year by MMRI, focused on landing site sampling at key islands for fisheries, collecting data on species composition and fishery operation

6. SSF profile gaps and plans for updating or consideration for NPOA-SSF content

Table 7: Gaps in profile⁷

S.No.	Main gaps in SSF profile	Action required to update or implication for NPOA-SSF content and activities	Responsibility (if action)	Timeline (if action)
1.	No information on the number of women employed in fishery	Expansion of Fishermen's Registry to ensure all those participating in fisheries sector, across the value chain, including women are accounted for.	-	-
2.	Limitations in research capacity	Identify areas in need of priorities in terms of data and research, and utilize a targeted approach in narrowing the gap.	-	-

⁷ Based on presentation made at the Regional Inception Workshop on the National Plans of Action for Small-Scale Fisheries (NPOA-SSF) 20-22 Nov 2025, Colombo, Sri Lanka

Step 1-3: SSF Stakeholder Mapping

1. Stakeholder types

Table 8: Stakeholder Types⁸

Stakeholder types	National	Regional	Local
Small-scale seafood value chain			
Fisher groups (covering specific areas or fisheries)			Pole & line fisheries for Skipjack tuna. Handline fisheries for Yellowfin tuna. Billfish fisheries. Reef-based fisheries, grouper fisheries.
Suppliers to small-scale fisheries (port, boat, net and fuel suppliers)	MTCC (Engine), Fuel supplier (FSM, Hawks Fuel), Boat builders (private); harbor by government.		Local fishing gear vendors/suppliers, such as anchors, hooks weights, nets, etc.
Post-harvest (buyers, processors, traders and retailer)	MIFCO, many private processing companies such as Ensis, Horizon, etc.		Local island SMEs, women-led initiatives. Local-level processing companies.
Public-sector organizations			
Elected representatives (ministers, councillors and community leaders)	Elected members of Local Governance Authority (LGA), Elected members of the parliament. Minister/officials of Ministry of Gender and Social Development.	Atoll council representative.	Local island council representative. Women Development Committee (WDC) representatives.
Civil servants (from fisheries and non-fisheries departments)	Ministry of Fisheries; Ministry of Environment and Tourism; Ministry of Gender and Social development; Housing and Infrastructure; National Defense Force:		Local island council officers who manage fish markets. Fisheries rangers.

⁸ Based on presentation made at the Regional Inception Workshop on the National Plans of Action for Small-Scale Fisheries (NPOA-SSF) 20-22 Nov 2025, Colombo, Sri Lanka

Stakeholder types	National	Regional	Local
	Ministry of Finance: Ministry of Transport.		
Third-sector groups			
Research (fishery, social and economic)	Maldives Marine Research Institute (MMRI), Fisheries College – Maldives National University (MNU).		
Non-governmental organizations (environmental and social)	Maldives Underwater Initiative (MUI), Maldives Resilient Reefs, Miyaru, Save the Beach		Naifaru Juvenile, Marnie Research Centers in Resorts
Resource partners (donors and agencies)	FAO, BOBP-IGO, JICA, World Bank, ISDB, UNDP, GEF, IUCN, SFD		
Community associations	Fishermen's Association		Women's Development Committee (WDC)

2. Stakeholder Influence

Table 9: Stakeholder Influence⁹

Fishers and Processors (women)	Small Enterprises (Island/atoll level)	Traders	Consumers
Children and vulnerable groups	Fishers and Processors	Ministry of Fisheries	Large private companies
	Tourism Industry + relevant parties	Ministry of Environment	President's office
	Ministry of housing and finance	Ministry of Finance/ Financing institutions/ donors	Parliament

3. Stakeholder Connections

Table 10: Stakeholder connections

4. Stakeholder Interests

Table 11: Stakeholder Interests¹⁰

Stakeholders	Stakeholders' interests	How much they know about the SSF Guidelines/NPOA-SSF
Fishers	Secure and predictable income Improved fuel efficiency and reduced costs Access to ice, cold storage, and better landing facilities Fair market prices and timely payments Safety at sea, weather information	Low to moderate (general awareness of sustainable fishing, limited on global guidelines)

⁹ ibid

¹⁰ ibid

Stakeholders	Stakeholders' interests	How much they know about the SSF Guidelines/NPOA-SSF
Post-harvest	Reliable supply of quality fish Training in value addition, hygiene, packaging Access to modern processing tools and markets Reduced spoilage and better storage	Low (some awareness through community projects)
Suppliers	Stable demand for fuel, gear, and materials Opportunities to introduce new technologies (solar, efficient engines) Business continuity and profitable margins	Very low (guidelines seen as indirect to their operations)
Governance	Effective implementation of management plans Compliance with national regulations and reporting Sustainable resource use and climate resilience Meeting international commitments (IOTC, sustainability standards)	High (policy-level awareness and involvement)
NGOs	Community capacity building Gender inclusion and livelihood support Environmental conservation and responsible fishing Enhancing community participation	Moderate to high (actively use SSF rights-based frameworks)
Research	Data collection, stock assessments Climate and ecosystem research Testing new technologies and innovation Supporting evidence-based policy	High (policy-level awareness and involvement)

Step 1-4: SSF Governance Review and Gap Analysis

The Governance Review and Gap Analysis was based on the SSF Policy and Legal Diagnostic Toolbox developed by FAO, which provides three different tools for assessing the implementation of the SSF Guidelines through national legal and policy frameworks:

- tool 1 for identifying the status of a country in relation to global and regional legally binding instruments relevant to small-scale fisheries;
- tool 2 for identifying national policy and legal instruments relevant to small-scale fisheries, and the extent to which these instruments address key questions in accordance with the SSF Guidelines; and
- tool 3 for collecting information and views from small-scale fishers and their communities on the implementation of national laws and policies.

A detailed Legal and Policy review for MALDIVES is available as a standalone report.

1. Status and key gaps

The following is the status and key gaps as derived from the report.

Outcome from Tool 1: (International Conventions)

- Environment/ Biodiversity: Maldives is party to eight of the eleven key instruments
- Human Rights: Maldives is party to eight of the nine key instruments, and is not a party to the 1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families.
- Trade: Maldives is party to one (CITES) and has not yet ratified one instrument (WTO-fisheries subsidies)
- Labour (ILO): Maldives has ratified ten of 21 ILO Conventions relevant to fisheries. It has ratified 9 of 11 fundamental conventions, 0 of 3 governance (priority) conventions and 1 of 7 additional conventions selected with reference to their relevance to small-scale fisheries.

Outcome from Tool 2: (National Legal Instruments)

		Key Information / Summary	Level of alignment
	Policy and legal framework reviewed	National fisheries policy – 1, NPOA-IUU and NPOA-Sharks; eight fishery management plans. National Fisheries Primary Legislation -2 and National Fisheries Secondary Legislation - 18	
1	Definitions	All of Maldivian fishery is considered small-scale and hence there was no need for a separate definition	100% alignment
2	Objectives	All the questions were answered with a yes	100% alignment
3	Principles	With respect to the human-rights based approach, only community empowerment is featured and hence this was answered as 'partial'	67% alignment, 33% partial
4	Institutional and administrative arrangements	The question regarding whether the government institution's role is only advisory was answered in the negative as the government has a regulatory role	75% alignment, 25% not aligned
5	Tenure and access rights	Fishing for personal consumption is exempt from licensing. Handline/rod fishing from land for personal use does not require a license. However, it is of concern that no notification or compensation seems to be available if lives and livelihoods of fishers are disrupted for developmental activities	23% alignment, 77% not aligned

		Key Information / Summary	Level of alignment
6	Sustainable resource management and conservation	The fisheries development plans are targeted activities to sustain specific fisheries; but there is no targeted participation of fishers in protected areas, MCS etc	41% alignment, 52% not aligned, 7% partially aligned
7	Social development, employment and decent work	Social protection schemes are general, a few are targeted. Some components of the questions asked are found in fisheries policy	33% aligned, 42% not aligned 25% partially aligned
8	Value-chains, post-harvest and trade	Mentioned in the policy	100% aligned
9	Gender equality	The question that was answered partially referred to provision of maternity rights – which exclude women who are largely employed in the informal sector or are self-employed	83% aligned, 17% partially aligned
10	Disaster risks and climate change	While climate smart approach is to be used as a guiding principle, and fisheries is considered as a vulnerable sector, specific actions were not found	40% aligned, 60% not aligned
11	Access to justice, enforcement, and accountability	There is no clarity on access to justice for fishers	100% not aligned

Outcome from Tool 3 (Community perception)

This has not yet been carried out in the Maldives

2. Key Gaps¹¹

Table 12: Key Opportunities based on Gap analysis

S.No.	Opportunity/Gap analysis – key findings	Implications for NPOA-SSF content and activities
1	Tenure and access rights	At the moment, land-based tenure rights are not a major concern in the fisheries sector. This is possibly more applicable in area-based fishing access rights, including access to resources.
2	Sustainable resource management and conservation	The need to address limitations in resource management capacity, including enforcement and data.
3	Social development, employment and decent work	Addressing social protection rights specifically for fisheries sector.
4		
5		

¹¹ Based on presentation made at the Regional Inception Workshop on the National Plans of Action for Small-Scale Fisheries (NPOA-SSF) 20-22 Nov 2025, Colombo, Sri Lanka

Step 1-5: Rationale for an NPOA-SSF

1. Rationale for NPOA-SSF

The SSF Guidelines, and therefore the NPOA-SSF to implement them, will be interpreted and applied consistently with the existing rights and obligations of MALDIVES under national and international law and with due regard to voluntary commitments under applicable regional and international instruments. They are complementary to and support national, regional and international initiatives that address human rights, responsible fisheries and sustainable development. The SSF Guidelines were developed complementary to the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and support responsible fisheries and sustainable resource utilization in accordance with this instrument. Implementing the SSF Guidelines can also act as a springboard towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, in particular SDG 14.b: to “provide access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets”.

Table 13: Rationale for NPOA-SSF¹²

Problem Statement	Specific Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate Vulnerabilities and Environmental Changes • Financial and Risk-Management Constraints • Governance, Rights, and Market Challenges • Sustainability of Fish Stocks and Resource Pressure • Limited Livelihood Diversification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate vulnerabilities and environmental changes – Small-scale fishers face declining catches and unpredictable fishing conditions due to climate-driven shifts in marine ecosystems. • Financial and risk-management constraints – Many fishers lack access to insurance, credit, and safety nets, making them highly vulnerable to losses and disruptions. • Governance, rights, and market challenges – Weak bargaining power, regulatory gaps, and limited market access reduce the stability and fairness of small-scale fishing livelihoods. • Sustainability of fish stocks and resource pressure – Changes in stock availability and increased effort needs strain both fishing operations and long-term resource health. • Limited livelihood diversification – Dependence on fishing alone leaves households exposed when catches fall or fishing days reduce.

¹² Based on presentation made at the Regional Inception Workshop on the National Plans of Action for Small-Scale Fisheries (NPOA-SSF) 20-22 Nov 2025, Colombo, Sri Lanka

2. Contribution to national and international commitments

The NPOA-SSF will contribute to achieving the objectives of the **National fisheries policy, NPOA-IUU and NPOA-Sharks, eight fishery management plans and other supporting and relevant legislation.**

Nothing in the SSF Guidelines should be read as limiting or undermining any rights or obligations to which MALDIVES is subject under international law.

The NPOA-SSF will also support MALDIVES's commitments to the SDG.

Table 14: MALDIVES's commitments¹³

SSF Guidelines	National law or policy	International commitment
5a. Responsible governance of tenure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maldives National Framework for Management of Protected and Conserved Areas (2024-2029).Date: 2024-08 Regulations no. 2023/R-98 on Control of International Trade in Endangered Species and Registration of Traders and Goods.Date: 2023-04-20 Maldives Fifth Tourism Master Plan 2023-2027.Date: 2023 Waste Management Act, no. 24 of 2022.Date: 2022-12-18 The International Trade Controls on Endangered Species (CITES) Act, no. 13 of 2022.Date: 2022-07-20 The Energy Act, no. 18 of 2021.Date: 2021-10-11 The Natural Resources and Naturally Protected Species Regulations, no. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (LOSC) CITES 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) 1995 Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks (UNFSA)

¹³ The content for the column 'National law or policy' under the different themes of the SSF Guidelines have been taken from [SSF-LEX](#). **These need to be checked and updated**

SSF Guidelines	National law or policy	International commitment
	<p>R/25 of 2021.Date: 2021-02-17</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maldives Billfish Fishery Management Plan, 2020Date: 2020-12 • Maldives Diamondback Squid Fishery Management Plan, 2020.Date: 2020-12 • Maldives Grouper Fishery Management Plan.Date: 2020-12 • Maldives Marine Aquarium Fishery Management Plan, 2020.Date: 2020-12 • Regulation no. 2020/R-100 on Conduction of Marine Research in the Maldives.Date: 2020-10-19 • General Fisheries Regulation of the Maldives [Regulation No. R-75/2020].Date: 2020-08-30 • National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2016-2025.Date: 2015 • Waste Management Regulations, no. R/58 of 2013.Date: 2013-08-05 • Seventh National Development Plan.Date: 2006 • National Environment Action Plan (NEAP).Date: 1990 • General Fisheries Regulations.Date: 1987 • Regulations for Issuing the Licence to Fish in the Exclusive Economic Zone 	

SSF Guidelines	National law or policy	International commitment
	of the Republic of Maldives. Date: 0000	
5b. Sustainable resource management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maldives National Framework for Management of Protected and Conserved Areas (2024-2029). Date: 2024-08 • Regulations no. 2023/R-98 on Control of International Trade in Endangered Species and Registration of Traders and Goods. Date: 2023-04-20 • Maldives Fifth Tourism Master Plan 2023-2027. Date: 2023 • Waste Management Act, no. 24 of 2022. Date: 2022-12-18 • The International Trade Controls on Endangered Species (CITES) Act, no. 13 of 2022. Date: 2022-07-20 • The Energy Act, no. 18 of 2021. Date: 2021-10-11 • The Natural Resources and Naturally Protected Species Regulations, no. R/25 of 2021. Date: 2021-02-17 • Maldives Billfish Fishery Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) • 1995 Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks (UNFSA) • BBNJ Agreement •

SSF Guidelines	National law or policy	International commitment
	<p>Plan, 2020.Date: 2020-12</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maldives Diamondback Squid Fishery Management Plan, 2020.Date: 2020-12 • Maldives Grouper Fishery Management Plan.Date: 2020-12 • Maldives Marine Aquarium Fishery Management Plan, 2020.Date: 2020-12 • Regulation no. 2020/R-100 on Conduction of Marine Research in the Maldives.Date: 2020-10-19 • General Fisheries Regulation of the Maldives [Regulation No. R-75/2020].Date: 2020-08-30 • National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2016-2025.Date: 2015 • Waste Management Regulations, no. R/58 of 2013.Date: 2013-08-05 • Seventh National Development Plan.Date: 2006 • National Environment Action Plan (NEAP).Date: 1990 • General Fisheries Regulations.Date: 1987 	

SSF Guidelines	National law or policy	International commitment
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulations for Issuing the Licence to Fish in the Exclusive Economic Zone of the Republic of Maldives.Date: 0000 	
6. Social development, employment and decent work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maldives Tuna Fishery Management Plan, 2021.Date: 2021-01 • Maldives National Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (NPOA-IUU).Date: 2019-07 • National Fisheries and Agricultural Policy 2019-2029Date: 2019-07 • Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem Strategic Action Programme.Date: 2015 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1965 International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination • 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights • 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) • 1990 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) • 2006 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities • 2006 International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance • Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment • 1930 ILO Forced Labour Convention (C029) and its Protocol of 2014 • 1948 ILO Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention (C087) • 1949 ILO Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention (C098) • 1951 ILO Equal Remuneration Convention (C100) • 1957 ILO Abolition of Forced Labour Convention (C105) • 1958 ILO Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention (C111) • 1973 ILO Minimum Age Convention (C138) • 1981 Occupational Safety and Health Convention (C155) • 1999 ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (C182) • Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention (Revised), 2003, as amended (No. 185)

SSF Guidelines	National law or policy	International commitment
7. Value chains, post-harvest and trade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reef Fishery Management Regulation (Regulation No. R-4/2025).Date: 2025-01-13 • Sea Cucumber Fishery Management Regulation (Regulation No. R-3/2025).Date: 2025-01-13 • Fisheries-related Activities Licensing Regulations (No. 2023/R-82).Date: 2023-03-01 • Tuna Fishery Management Regulation (Regulation No. R-139/2022).Date: 2022-08-29 • Regulation no. 2020/R-100 on Conduction of Marine Research in the Maldives.Date: 2020-10-19 • Regulation No: 2020/R-93 on minimum price for sales and purchase of fish.Date: 2020-10-03 • General Fisheries Regulation of the Maldives [Regulation No. R-75/2020].Date: 2020-08-30 • National Standard for Carbon Monoxide Treated Fish.Date: 2017 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
8. Gender equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maldives Tuna Fishery Management Plan, 2021.Date: 2021-01 • National Fisheries and Agricultural Policy 2019-2029Date: 2019-07 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) •

SSF Guidelines	National law or policy	International commitment
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender Equality Act No. 18/2016.Date: 2016-08-23 • National Gender Equality Action Plan 2022-2026.Date: 2016-08-23 • Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem Strategic Action Programme.Date: 2015 • Maldives Family Act No. 4/2000.Date: 2000-12-12 	
9. Disaster risks and climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Maldives' Third Nationality Determined Contribution</u>.Date: 2025-02 • <u>Climate Emergency Act (Act No. 9 of 2021)</u>.Date: 2021-05-18 • <u>Health National Adaptation Plan (HNAP) 2020-2024</u>.Date: 2020-11 • <u>Maldives' Intended Nationality Determined Contribution (INDC)</u>.Date: 2015-09 • <u>Climate Change Policy Framework (2015-2025)</u>Date: 2015-08 • <u>Community-Based Disaster Risk Reduction (CBDRR) Framework</u>.Date: 2014 • <u>Disaster Management Act 2006</u>.Date: 2007-10-03 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1992 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) • 1997 Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change • 2015 Paris Agreement

Step 1-6: NPOA-SSF development plan template¹⁴

Table 15: Development Plan Template

What (activity)	Who (responsibility)	When (timelines)	Challenges/Opportunities
Inception meeting (workshop outputs, roles and responsibilities discussed)	Fisheries Department	(Approx. 2 months)	Funding for Inception meeting; capacity building needs of Task Force, Logistics, limited capacity
IHH characterization	Ministry	(Approx. 2 months)	Gaps in data need to be addressed Validation of existing information
Capacity building of National Task Force	Fisheries Department	(Approx. 3 months)	Technical support needed
Stakeholder mapping and communication strategy plan	National Task Force	(Approx. 1 month)	Logistical arrangements, limited capacity
Governance review, Rationale for NPOA-SSF	National Task Force	(Approx 1 month)	Reaching consensus
NPOA-SSF development plan	National Task Force	(Approx 2 months)	Ensuring all considerations and inputs are integrated
Preparation for public launch of NPOA-SSF process	National Task Force	(Approx. 2 weeks)	Logistics, outreach, budget

¹⁴ Based on presentation made at the Regional Inception Workshop on the National Plans of Action for Small-Scale Fisheries (NPOA-SSF) 20-22 Nov 2025, Colombo, Sri Lanka

What (activity)	Who (responsibility)	When (timelines)	Challenges/Opportunities
Public launch: Awareness building and understanding expectations of target stakeholders	National Task Force	TBD (Approx 2 months)	Technical support, logistics, budget
Intervention logic	National Task Force	TBD (Approx 1 month)	Technical support
Preparation (question, materials) for consultations	National Task Force	(Approx 1 month)	
NPOA-SSF Log frame	National Task Force	TBD (Approx 3 months)	Consideration of conflicting priorities
NPOA-SSF drafting	National Task Force	TBD (Approx 2 months)	Technical support, budgeting
NPOA-SSF draft finalization write-shop	National Task Force	TBD (Approx 1 week)	
Stakeholder consultations	National Task Force	TBD (Approx 2 weeks)	Logistics and addressing discussions
NPOA-SSF publication	National Task Force	TBD	Atoll and island level dissemination
NPOA-SSF launch event	National Task Force	TBD	Budget and logistics
Planning for implementation and monitoring	National Task Force	TBD	To be determined during development stage

What (activity)	Who (responsibility)	When (timelines)	Challenges/Opportunities
Workshop results relayed to Fisheries Ministry and relevant stakeholders	Workshop participants	Sep 2025	
Fisheries Ministry confirms intent to develop and launch NPOA-SSF	Fisheries Ministry	TBD	
Collecting relevant and comprehensive information on SSF actors across the country	Fisheries Ministry	TBD	Logistical support (from ministry and other relevant agencies, councils) Budget

Milestone summary

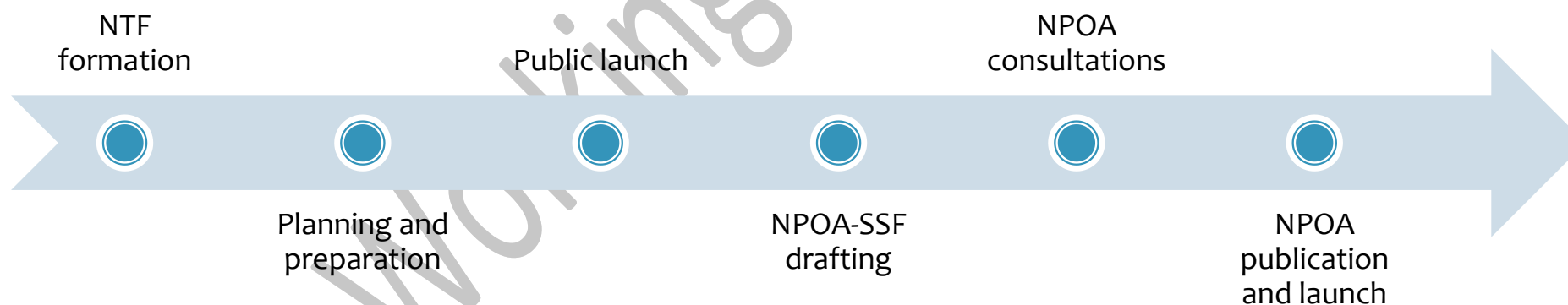


Table 16: Logframe

Working Document

Step 1-7: National platform establishment

A narrative section could be added here after the finalization of the NTF.

Working Document

Step 2-3: Stakeholder consultation¹⁵

- Based on the stakeholder mapping, which are the stakeholder groups to be consulted (including fishery sub-sectors)?
 - All groups identified
- What are the criteria for selecting consultation workshop participants?
 - Focused selection for pelagic & reef-based fisheries
 - Regional (atoll) representation
 - Give priority based on relevance to fisheries sector
 - Prioritize groups most affected
- Are different consultation methodologies needed for different stakeholder groups? Do separate consultations need to be held with different groups (e.g., men and women)?
 - Regional consultation – With processors, etc, and groups most affected, in a less formal setting
 - Government agency meetings – In person
 - NGOs, SME – Online questionnaire
- What are the key geographic areas to cover? Are there SSF hotspots?
 - Ensure regional representation
 - Consideration of fishery-based hotspots (such as regions with more resorts, traders, processing plants, etc)
- How many stakeholder consultation meetings should be held and how many stakeholders should be reached in total to ensure legitimacy of the process?
 - Based on needs, capacity, availability/co-operation, timeline
- How long should each consultation workshop be (1-3 days)? Will different lengths be required for different groups depending on their knowledge of the SSF Guidelines?
 - Duration of the workshops would depend on the awareness needs of the allocated groups based of the stakeholders that will be identified
- What ongoing processes can be tapped into for consultations?

¹⁵ Based on presentation made at the Regional Inception Workshop on the National Plans of Action for Small-Scale Fisheries (NPOA-SSF) 20-22 Nov 2025, Colombo, Sri Lanka

- Ongoing engagements with local-level fisheries activities (such as ongoing data collection programs)
- What budget is available (this may influence answers to some of the above questions!)?
 - Allocate local budget (as provided by the Finance Ministry)
 - Seek donor funding (grants etc.)

What needs to be prepared for the stakeholder consultation process:

- Draft a concept note with clear objectives and an agenda for each of the consultation workshops, considering needs for presentations, break-out groups and discussions
- Ensure agreements and clearances from relevant authorities (formal and customary)
- Prepare background information documents (to be distributed, e.g., copies of the SSF Guidelines, simplified versions in local languages) and presentations to be made
- Prepare facilitation materials required (flipcharts, screens, etc)
- Send out invitations well in advance with clear information on purpose of the consultations and advice on how representatives should be selected (considering gender balance!)

Working Document

Step 2-4: Log Frame

A. Narrative summary	B. Objectively verifiable indicators	C. Means of verification	D. Important risks and assumptions
NPOA-SSF objective(s)			
Outcomes What are the intended effects of the outputs? What are the benefits and to whom do they accrue? What changes will the outputs and their use bring about?			
Outcome 1			
Outcome 2			
Outcome...n			
Output What outputs (deliverables) are to be produced in order to achieve the purpose?			
Output 1			
Output 2			
Output n			

Working Document



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