Baseline Analysis of Adaptation Capacity and Climate Change Vulnerability Impacts in the Tourism Sector

Inception report

DAS Pvt Ltd

Baseline Analysis of Adaptation Capacity & Climate Change Vulnerability in the tourism sector
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1 Introduction

“Climate is a principal resource for tourism, as it codetermines the suitability of locations for a wide range of tourist activities, is a principal driver of global seasonality in tourism demand, and has an important influence on operating costs, such as heating-cooling, snowmaking, irrigation, food and water supply, and insurance costs. Thus, changes in the length and quality of climate-dependent tourism seasons (e.g., sun-and-sea or winter sports holidays) could have considerable implications for competitive relationships between destinations and therefore the profitability of tourism enterprises” (Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation in the Tourism Sector, 2008).

Climate would be the first thing on a tourist’s mind when completing the packing before embarking on to fulfill their dream holiday. Tourists would want to make every penny worth it by spending the most perfect holiday, especially when they visit the “sunny side of life”, the Maldives. Maldives is blessed with a gratifying climate throughout the year, making it the most perfect destination for a holiday. However, climate change could change this. Climate change could have serious impacts on tourists, the tourism sector and thereby the economy of the country since tourism is the main economic ‘back bone’ of the country. Climate change not only dictates the amount of money being spent, but rather where it is spent. It is envisaged that at a global scale, climate change will have a devastating effect on the welfare and would be unevenly spread across regions (Berrittella et al., 2006). In a climate vulnerable environment like the small low lying islands of Maldives, increasing the resilience of the tourism sector to climate shocks is very crucial. Thereby this study focuses on the climate change vulnerability of the tourism sector and the adaptive capacity within the sector to such climate change impacts.
2 Tourism sector overview

2.1 Background

The tourism in Maldives began in 1972 with the launch of first resorts; Kurumba Village and Bandos Island Resort. The resorts had a bed capacity of 280. As shown in Figure 2-1, the tourism industry has been growing to become largest economic activity in this small island nation. Currently there are 343 registered tourist establishments (105 resorts, 20 hotels, 60 Guest houses and 158 safari vessels) with a bed capacity of 27,538 (Tourism, 2012). As of 2011 the total number of tourist to Maldives was in excess of 931,333 tourists (Tourism, 2011) (2.9% growth is expected in tourist arrival by 2012). Tourist arrival is seasonal (see Figure 2-2) with usually over 90% bed occupancies during monsoonal dry period or the winter season in the Northern Hemisphere.

![Figure 2-1: Bed occupancy of resorts](source: Statistical year book archive.)
Maldives tourism is famous for being exclusive and therefore targeted to high-end tourism markets (like Europe, Japan and recently China). The sector contributes to about 36.5% to the GDP directly in 2011 (DNP, 2011) and brings in over 70% of the foreign exchange to the country. Tourism sector in Maldives has developed around the natural beauty of the islands like white sandy beaches and the rich coral reef ecosystem. The serene and delicate environment has always been a selling point for the sector.

### 2.2 Environmental Issues

The importance of the natural environment cannot be overstated in the context of the tourism development in Maldives. Harmonizing the tourist activities with the environment is a target for many resort developers. Like any other development activity, the sector development has raised some environmental issues. Some of the issues include, waste, damage to coastal environment, poaching of endangered species which is used as souvenirs.

Waste has been an issue for tourist establishments and its surrounding community. It has been estimated that on average a tourist produces 3.5 kg of waste per person per day (MEMP, 2010), which is almost twice as the locals. Given the high influx of visitors the amount of waste the industry could produce is of a national concern. This was reflected in the tourism regulation which mandates the resorts to have an environmentally acceptable way of managing the waste. However, the full implementation of that regulation by the industry is arguable. It is also noted that many resorts, hotels and live aboard has complained about the waste from nearby local communities being dumped in to the sea, affecting the tourist activities.
The development of a resort involves a high degree of modifications to the island and the surrounding environment. It involves dredging, reclamations and many other coastal modification activities. This affects the nearby marine and coastal environment adversely. In addition, high levels of tourist activities such as diving, snorkeling causes damage to marine ecosystems due to lack of tourist awareness and enforcement. This may further exacerbate the impacts of climate change.

The tourism industry also has a demand for exotic souvenirs, like shark jaws, turtle shells etc. During the early days of the industry there was a huge decline on many exotic marine animals. Today, however, these animals have been protected by law and even somewhat managed by the industry as well.

The environmental standards of resort development and operations are regulated by both tourism regulation and environment regulations. But enforcement of these regulations are not well practiced. For example the tourism regulation specifies that the built-up area of a resort should be less than 40%, it is not clear how well this is enforced.

Recently there have been new environmental issues and concerns identified within the industry. Vulnerability of the industry is to climate change and natural disasters (storm surges, ENSO events etc) have been raised as a serious concern (MHAHE, 2001).

3 Vulnerability of the tourism sector

The wider climate change debate has until recently mainly focused on mitigation, while the sparse research specifically dealing with tourism and climate change has largely concentrated on tourism’s vulnerability and adaptation to climate change. Both the tourism industry and researchers have identified a threat to tourism resulting from climate change, especially in developing countries and small island states like the Maldives. (World Tourism Organisation, 2003).

Climate change is likely to have a long term affect on tourist activities, destinations, and flows as well as the capacities of countries, destinations, and firms to respond to such change (UNWTO, 2008). However, while there is the potential to transfer knowledge from one setting to another, the specific capacities of many locations in the developing world to adapt with respect to tourism and climate change has not been sufficiently addressed.

Tourism is the main economic activity and contributes about one third to the GDP of Maldives (NAPA, 2007) and accounts for 17,000 direct jobs (World Bank et al. 2005) around the country. Maldives is considered to be among the most vulnerable countries to the impacts of climate change, due to its small size, low elevation and geographical dispersion. According to Shaig (2006) 84% of the resorts are less than 0.1 km² while the largest tourist resort is just 0.5 km². The
average elevation of tourist resorts are 1.5 m above mean sea level which makes the islands highly vulnerable to climate change impacts and other natural disasters. During tsunami of 2004, over-water structures in resorts were amongst the most impacted and the total damage estimated for the tourism sector was US$230 million (World Bank et al., 2005). As shown in Figure 3-1 there was a marked decline in tourist arrival the following year, having an impact on the overall economy.

![Figure 3-1: Effect of tsunami on number of tourist arrivals.](image)

One of the most important assets of tourist resorts are the beaches, with 70% of tourists visiting the Maldives primarily for beach holidays. Sea level rise would disrupt tourism through loss of beaches. Already 45% of tourist resorts have reported varying degrees of beach erosion (MHAHE, 2001).

The reef ecosystems of Maldives are the seventh largest in the world and their diversity is amongst the richest in the world. Climate Change causes the sea surface temperature (SST) to rise, (Solomon et al., 2007). This rise cannot be tolerated by coral reefs as they are sensitive to even very minute changes in their environment which leads to the bleaching of corals (Hinds, 2011).

The global bleaching event of 1998 was particularly severe in the Maldives, and caused a massive drawback for the tourism industry. The bleaching led to high mortality of many of the coral population throughout the country, where up to 80% of hard corals were bleached down to 30m (MHAHE, 2001).
Since tourism sector being the back bone of the economy, predicted climate change would have very serious implications on the country’s economy.

The IPCC has concluded that increases in the frequency or magnitude of certain weather and climate extremes (e.g. heat waves, droughts, floods, tropical cyclones) are likely as a result of projected climate change (IPCC 2007a). Such changes will affect the tourism industry through increased infrastructure damage, additional emergency preparedness requirements, higher operating expenses (e.g., insurance, backup water and power systems, and evacuations), and business interruptions (Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation in the Tourism Sector, 2008). Therefore, there is no doubt that the tourism sector of Maldives will be highly affected by the projected changes. The following sections discuss the technical approach to be utilized in analyzing the adaptive capacity and climate vulnerability impacts in the Maldives tourism sector.

4 Technical approach

The assignment includes a baseline study to be conducted based on key informant interviews and with suggested target groups including industry representatives, operators, senior management staffs and dependent communities. A pre-tested questionnaire will be used to collect the qualitative and quantitative data ensuring that data collection follows standardized methodology while considering the limited time frame and availability of suggested participants. This section describes the technical methodology that will be employed to achieve the objectives and deliver the outputs described in the ToR. A specific focus is given to the research and surveying methodology.

4.1 Secondary research

The secondary research will analyze relevant reports, excerpts from books, case studies, projects and other literature to gather in-depth knowledge on the thematic area of the consultancy. The research will provide structured and up-to-date information on climate change vulnerability impacts on the tourism sector of the Maldives and the adaptive capacity of the industry by analyzing academic materials in the following areas.

4.1.1 Vulnerability of tourism operators and tourism-associated communities to the adverse effects of climate change

It can be said without a doubt; if the CO2 emissions continue at the current rate, the threat on the islands of Maldives would be tremendous. What is not unequivocal but more important is what events will lead up to the ultimate impacts of climate change. Although the National Adaptation
Program of Action (NAPA, 2007) identifies and prioritizes the climate change related hazards for Maldives, it does not demystify the different levels of devastation of these hazards on different sectors. NAPA report lists tourism as one of the vulnerable sectors to climate change; it does not invariably explain how the different components of the tourism industry are affected by effects of climate change.

To understand “the current adaptive capacity of the tourism sector in Maldives to respond to the impacts of climate change”, it is imperative to understand and prioritize the climate change induced hazards predicted for Maldivian tourism sector and it is vital to understand how these hazard effect the vulnerability of different operational fundamentals of the tourism sector.

By analyzing current literature on the matter, the following artifacts will be created under this section:

Artifact 1: A prioritized list of climate change induced hazards that Maldivian tourism sector is exposed to, in the immediate to long term.

Artifact 2: Effects of climate hazards on the vulnerability of areas such as the coastal environment, freshwater management, wastewater management, waste management and energy management in the tourism sector.

The following key literature will be analyzed amongst others:

2. IPCC reports
3. Survey on climate change adaptation measures (Shaiq, 2011)
4. Strategic National Action Plan for Disaster Risk Reduction
5. First national communication

4.1.2 Adaptive capacity of tourism operators, and tourism-associated communities to reduce risks to climate-induced economic losses;

It can be safely presumed that the literature available on this section will be limited. Adaptive measures taken by the resorts, safari boats and tourism associated communities do not appear to be well documented. However, by analyzing existing literature, general adaptive capacity of the tourism sector will be described under this section. The adaptive technologies and the corresponding climate hazard will be identified.

Artifact 3: Description of adaptive capacity and tabulation of adaptive technologies against corresponding climate hazard(s).

The following key literature will be analyzed among others:

1. Survey on climate change adaptation measures (Shaiq, 2011)
2. Disaster plans of the resorts and safari boats

4.1.3 Existing National Tourism Policies, Laws, Regulations and Frameworks

The existing national policies, laws, regulations and frameworks on tourism will be analyzed. The policies will be compared against the vulnerabilities.

Artifact 4: Compare national policies/laws/regulations/frameworks against the vulnerabilities

The following key literature will be analyzed under this section among others:

1. Tourism Master plans
2. Tourism Regulations
3. Tourism Act (2/99)
4. Strategic Action Plan

4.2 Climate financing within the tourism sector of Maldives

Existing literature will be analyzed to identify climate financing mechanisms used within the tourism sector of the Maldives and government tourism policies and regulations will be examined to scope an initial understanding of the level of knowledge on climate financing within the government.

Artifact 5: List of existing mechanisms, policies and regulations on climate financing

The following literature will be analyzed under this section among others:

1. Tourism Master plan
2. Case studies (news)
3. National Economic and Environmental Development Studies
4. Strategic action plan

4.3 Primary research

The primary research will focus to address the knowledge gap in the secondary research and build up on the findings of the secondary research. Surveys, interviews, field visits, and stakeholder consultations will be carried out to strengthen artifacts 1 to 5 and will gather information on awareness on climate change among the stakeholders. Following aspects will be considered:

4.3.1 Baseline Survey

The main activity under this section will be a survey. The target group will be divided into three groups; tourism operators (group1), tourism associated communities (group 2) and government of Maldives (group 3).
**Group 1:** The group has two sectors; resorts and safari boats.

**Group 2:** At least one community from each region will be selected.

**Group 3:** Relevant government agencies in the tourism sector will be covered.

The first two groups will be surveyed to gather information on the following areas:

1. Vulnerability to the adverse effects of climate change;
2. Adaptive capacity to reduce risks to climate-induced economic losses;
3. Knowledge and use of climate risk financing instruments and solutions;
4. Motivation to/not to undertake adaptation actions;
5. Perceptions of the key barriers to adaptation;

The third group will be surveyed to gather information on:

1. Knowledge of tourism policies and planning frameworks and national policies and laws regulating/relating to tourism operations;
2. Knowledge of climate risk financing instruments and solutions; and
3. Perceptions within the government of the key barriers to adaptation.

The questionnaires designed for the surveys will be pre-approved by the Ministry of Tourism Arts and Culture (MTAC) and a pre-test run would be conducted before the actual survey is carried out. Questionnaires will be filled using face to face interview technique.

### 4.3.2 Sampling approach

In sampling the survey population, a key focus would be given to consider the geographical spread.

**Group 1:** *This group has two sectors; resorts and safari boats.*

There are 97 resorts and various safari boats. To conduct a survey in such a huge group would be costly and time consuming. It is worthwhile to select a representative sample from this group. As climatic change depend on geography, it is necessary to make homogeneous group by stratifying according to administrative regions. Simple random sample would be used to selected resorts within a particular region which depends on the number of resorts in that region.

Apart from Resorts, safaris would also be selected based on a list provided by Ministry of Tourism using simple random sample with replacement. However, this sample population would not be stratified.

The total number of samples both from resorts and safaris would be chosen in a way so that any conclusions could be drawn with a 95% confidence where these conclusions would represent the
situation for the entire country. The final conclusions would be based on statistically weighted results which would be more meaningful compared to averages.

**Group 2: The community**

At least one island from each administrative region would be selected based on probability proportionate to size. This will give a high weightage to those islands with large population.

The total number of samples would be chosen so that any conclusions could be drawn with a 95% confidence where these conclusions would represent the situation for the entire country. The final conclusions would be based on statistically weighted results which would be more meaningful compared to averages.

In addition to these factors, consideration will be given to the financial resources and the time when the sample sizes are chosen.

In sampling the survey population, a key focus would be given to consider the geographical spread. Depending on the number of resorts, a representative sample size would be chosen. The final conclusions would be based on statistically weighted results which would be more meaningful compared to averages.

In addition to these factors, consideration will be given to the financial resources and the time when the sample sizes are chosen.

### 4.4 Achieving the objectives through the approach

A combination of the above two approaches would pave the way to achieve the objectives of the assignment. The secondary research would give an insight about the “status” of the tourism sector. This will give an in-depth knowledge of the climate impact hazards, how vulnerable the sector is to these hazards and what kind of policy instruments are available to minimize the impacts and what kind of adaptive measures are carried out to address these climate change impact hazards.

Furthermore, the secondary research would guide or assist to fine tune the primary research or the field surveys. Unless a field survey is undertaken, a proper understanding could not be drawn regarding climate change and adaptive capacity within the tourism sector. The field survey would assess the in-depth of following key aspects among others:

- The general awareness about climate change.
- What kind of threats they consider as climate change related threats and why they consider it as a threat.
- If given a hierarchy, how do they classify the most threatening.
- How they foresee climate change related hazards would impact their business.
- Have they experienced any of the climate change related hazards and what kind of loss have they have experienced (in physical and financial terms)
- Do they keep a track record or what kind of mechanisms are there if any to record the impacts due to damages
- What kinds of actions they have undertaken if any and what other actions they can undertake to minimize the impacts.
- How would they rank the necessary actions, based on what factors (technical advice, effectiveness, cost etc…)
- If there are no efforts made to address the climate related impacts, what have been the barriers
- Depending on the actions taken (be it physical action or plans) what kind of positive and negative feedbacks have they encountered (for example changes in physical dynamics around the island due to breakwater construction, impact on human and financial resources due to implementation of monitoring plans etc..)
- Their awareness about the existing policy instruments (environment, infrastructure tourism laws and regulations building codes etc…)
- What hinders to abide by these laws and regulations and what are their recommendations to the policy makers
- What kinds of financial guarantees (insurance policies, taxes, revolving funds, donations etc…) are in place to tackle climate related impacts.
- How effective are they are and about the possibilities for improvement.
- In addition to the general view on climate change and its impacts, the tourism dependent communities would be assessed about the relationship they have with the tourism industry, how much dependent they are (social and economic benefits) and what kind of impacts they foresee for the community should there be impacts on the tourism sector due to climate change.

The questionnaires would be designed and fine tuned such that these areas would be focused so that the objective of the assignment can be achieved.

The following shows a schematic of the approach, how the objectives of the assignment would be achieved.
Baseline Analysis of Adaptation Capacity & Climate Change Vulnerability in the tourism sector

**Objectives**

- Determine the existing vulnerabilities, existing adaptation responses and gaps in response to climate change
- Determine the awareness and vulnerability of the tourism operators, and dependent communities
- Determine the readiness of the government institutions

**Types of data**

- Historical records
- Climate trends
- Policies (national policies, laws and regulations)
- Adaptation measures
- Level of knowledge about climate change
- Level of knowledge about Climate related threats
- Knowledge on how they foresee climate change in future
- Events they have encountered
- Impacts it had on their business (social and economic terms)
- Physical adaptive measures they have undertaken to minimize the impacts
- Strategies or plans undertaken
- Institutional arrangements
- Financial instruments used and available
- Information on cooperate social responsibilities with regard to increasing adaptive capacity of associated communities
- Barriers and risks

**Collection methodology**

- Reports on tourism
- Excerpts from books
- Case studies
- Project documents

**Quality control and analysis**

- Pretesting the questionnaires
  - Revisiting the questionnaires, Random data entering , visit with interviewers, data verification i.e forms, interview recordings.

- Data processing and Analysis
  - Data processed and analyzed by using a computer based software SPSS

- Report write-up
  - Compilation of report
5 Views of stakeholders about the exercise

An attempt was made to get a general view of the stakeholders about this exercise. The following stakeholders were approached and follows their view:

Sun Travels and Tours Pvt Ltd

They were keen to hear about the initiative and mentioned that this would be a useful exercise. They shared their experience on usual surveys and provided some advice on how to successfully carry out the exercise. They asked to share the documents so that they can have more in-depth look and mentioned that they are ready and looking forward to have a “longer chat”.

According to the Inception Workshop Report prepared by the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture which was based on the workshop held on 21st March 2012 where stakeholders including resorts and safari boats participated, the technical guidance to tourism operators on how to climate-proof freshwater and wastewater management systems, energy services, infrastructure design and locations are important.

The lack of effective communication between government, resorts and communities were also highlighted. Hence, it is believed that approaching stakeholders would not be an easy task and this project could be one of the means to strengthen the communications between government, resorts and communities.

6 Challenges to the assignment

It is envisaged there will be many challenges during this exercise. By applying preplanned standardized methods it is expected that these challenges could be overcome. The following approach will be taken to overcome the challenges faced during baseline assessment.

6.1 Preparation

Appropriate preparation for baseline work is critical, especially in conducting interviews in resorts and safaris etc. Before embarking on the field works, it is imperative to consider the availability of target groups and the limited time available to them. Therefore, one of the first steps in planning for baseline study will be to obtain the support and fix a pre-arranged appointment with the interviewees. However, this assignment requires significant commitment from participating parties and their complete understanding of the assignment before moving forward. Hence, identification of focal persons and information sharing from the MTAC is essential to coordinate the study from the first day of the assignment to the last day of data.
collection. Similarly, necessary approvals and review of assignment methodology and questionnaire is equally important to complete the study on time.

6.2 Application of study tools

The assignment will adapt existing study tools demonstrated in similar assessments. The sampling tools to be used in the baseline analysis will be based on standard questionnaire developed after adding the questions relevant to the survey provided by the client. If necessary, the questionnaires would be revised after holding the pre-tests with relevant sampling population of interviewees. The challenges in adapting the proposed study tool would include translation of questions into local Dhivehi language as it is expect that some of the participants may not be fluent in English language. Therefore, the process may take additional time for translation, back translation and review. The enumerators and data team will take necessary actions to meet the challenges to be faced during interviewing and data analysis.

6.3 Sampling

The unreliable transfer and logistical arrangements to the sampling locations are often seemed as a huge challenge due to unscheduled transfer and also due to busy schedule of most stakeholders. Therefore, sampling would be one of the most difficult tasks when conducting surveys in different target groups of the tourism sector and its associated communities. However, during the sampling assignments these factors will be considered to avoid further delays and to complete the assignment as per the agreed schedule.

6.4 Recruiting a data collection team

An early identification has been made to recruit the data collection team members comprising enumerators and data processing supervisors. Enumerators have already been given information on interviewing methods and techniques. The data processing supervisors assigned for the baseline survey are well experienced in data processing and analysis particularly on computerized software tools such as SPSS. The selected enumerators will be able to perform the interviews in both Dhivehi and English to conduct the assignment with better participation from locals and foreigners whose participation is necessary to the exercise.

6.5 Implementing surveying works

It is important that the implementation of baseline assessments adheres to the approved methodology throughout the assignment. However, if a specific sample population is to be avoided due to any reason, similar population would be selected in consultation with the client. Every effort will be taken to include more samples and population groups as much as possible. It would also be considered to maintain the confidentiality and privacy of the respondents who are involved in the baseline study.
6.6 Data entry, cleaning and analysis

The data management work will be arranged in a way where data entry, cleaning and analysis will be done in a standardized manner. To avoid any discrepancies, data management supervisors will work on computer based software such as SPSS, which will help better management of data collection and analysis. The enumerators who will be engaged on the field works will also be able to enter the data collected after interviewing the target groups.

7 Comments on the TOR

Based on the detailed methodology it is believed that the timeframe for the activities outlined in the TOR is not sufficient. Limited existing literature, challenges anticipated with regard to the commitment and participation from the interviewees and their basic knowledge or lack of knowledge on the issue are few things which would hinder in completing the study on time.
# 8 Schedule and Timeline

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