



STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

2011 - 2015

MINISTRY OF TOURISM, ARTS AND CULTURE
Republic of Maldives



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FOR THE
TOURISM INDUSTRY
2011-2015**

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i. Executive Summary

(To be completed with the final document)

ii. List of abbreviations

CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HIES	Household Income & Employment Survey
HR	Human Resources
ILO	International Labour Organisation
MATI	Maldives Association of Tourism Industries
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MMPC	Maldives Marketing & PR Corporation
MoT/MTAC	Ministry of Tourism, Arts & Culture
MQA	Maldivian Qualification Authority
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
SME	Small, Medium Enterprises
TEAM	Tourism Employees Association of the Maldives
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
UNDP	United National Development Programme
UK	United Kingdom

Introduction

This Strategic Action Plan for Human Resource Development in the Maldives Tourism Industry (2011-2015) is a sector specific contribution to the UNDP supported project of 'Employment and Enterprise Development for Women and Youth' which is jointly implemented by the Ministry of Human Resources Youth and Sports along with the Ministry of Tourism, Arts & Culture, Ministry of Economic Development and the Department of Gender and Family Protection Services of the Ministry of Health and Family.

This cross-cutting project aims to improve the enabling environment needed to address the unemployment situation in the Maldives, placing special emphasis on the low participation of women and youth in the tourism sector as a critical problem.

The low participation exists in absolute figures as well as relative to the ever increasing expatriate employment in the industry that contributes to economic leakages and growing social challenges related to drugs & crime amongst inactive youths. Female Maldivians, representing half the population have shied from direct employment in resorts and hotels due to the stigmatisation of tourism jobs, social values attached to working away from family and subsequent undesirable working conditions.

All this impacts the general employment situation in the country. According to the 2009/10 HIES, national unemployment stood at 27%, with the rates among the 15-24 age group, women and residents of the atolls even higher.

The Strategic Action Plan is based on a Situational Analysis and aims to contribute to an effective utilisation of resources to positively impact on the employment situation in the tourism industry for Maldivians. The plan strives to create a better understanding of the local human resource supply and projected demand in the hospitality and tourism industry and improve policy around human resource development of the Tourism Sector, including an increased participation by locals, especially women. This strategy feeds into the national employment framework being formulated by the Ministry of Human Resources.

It is important to place the tourism HR strategy in the context of national labour criteria used as a MDG tool to measure poverty alleviation in the Maldives. These are the growth of labour productivity (the growth rate of GDP per person employed) and the ratio of employed to the total population (by gender):

- The growth in GDP per person employed has been dropping very recently – the average growth rate from 1995 to 2005 was about 1.5% per year while over the period 2006 to 2008 labour productivity, as measured by the growth of GDP per person employed, declined by -0.15%. Increasing congestion in the labour market probably caused this decline: the last few years has seen

a demographic wave of new-entrants churning through the labour market for jobs that match skills and pay preferences. The next five years will see a further increase of school leavers entering the employment market likely to constitute a stronger decline in the growth-rate and a subsequent increase in the poverty gap.

- The ratio of employed to total population increased during the period from 1995 to 2004 for both females and males. Subsequent to 2005, this ratio has fallen for both genders, a result attributable to sputtering employment growth in relation to a steadily growing population. While the ratio of employed to total population averaged about 60% from 2002 to 2006, the ratio dropped to 57% during the period from 2007 to 2008.

The Government of the Maldives requires every sector to pro-actively seek measures that curb these poverty trends. The tourism sector is, and has been for a long-time, regarded as the “cash-cow” of the Maldivian economy and is expected to maintain its position as largest contributor to GDP and foreign exchange earnings. As a service industry, the human resource situation forms a pivotal element in ensuring a meaningful contribution to the welfare and wellbeing of the Maldivian nation.

Background

The current government of the Maldives has stated its intentions of expanding livelihoods and employment opportunities for Maldivians, including women and youth, as a prerequisite for sustained economic growth and a fundamental human right. This requires a clear strategy to absorb locals – men, women and youth, into the dominant sectors of the economy while creating new opportunities not only in Malé, but also in the Atolls.

2.1 DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Thirty-two percent of the population are classified as “youth” (aged 18-35). This equals some 96,000 people. Although the official definition goes up to 35 the majority of the issues described apply mainly to the 18-25 segments.

From 1995 to 2006 the population as a whole (50.7% male) grew by 22% but the 15-34 age group (49.2% male) increased by 51% and, within that, the 15-24 year old group (49.6% male) increased by 63%. This increase in the number of school leavers has added significantly to the workforce and has created the pressure for more employment opportunities to be generated.

The nation’s capital Malé’, with around 2km² of total land area has over one-third of the entire population of 298,968, while approximately 69 percent of the rest of the 200 inhabited islands have less than 1000 inhabitants according to the 2006 Census information.

2.2 PROBLEM DEFINED

According to the most recent data on labour force participation and employment, available from the 2009/10 Household Income & Employment Survey, the total Maldivian employment was estimated to be about 144,658 of whom 57% were males (81,958) and 43% females (62,700). The total number unemployed was estimated at 38,602 bringing the total labour force participation to about 183,260 out of an estimated population of 319,700 aged 15 and over. Unemployment rates are in double-digit 27%. **Nearly 38% of Maldivians in this age group do not participate in the labour market at all.** The labour market in the Maldives is heavily concentrated in and around Male. Households living in the outer atoll islands rely primarily on fishing, agriculture and income generating opportunities around (informal) trade.

The majority of Maldivians are employed in financing, insurance, real estate and business services (31,741), manufacturing (19,259), tourism (12,713), fishing and agriculture (12,624), wholesale and retail trade (11,711) and construction (5,930).

The labour market is characterized by a lack of participation and considerable spatial inequity and gender imbalances. The unemployment rate is significantly higher in the atolls than in Malé across all

age groups but the number not economically active was higher in Malé with labour force participation rates at 73% for males, while female participation rates were just 52%.

As male unemployment rates have been estimated to be considerably lower than their female counterparts – 8% versus 24%, with the probability of unemployment being higher compared to males. As in many other Asian countries, the burden of home-care, the age of the youngest child, number of children and spacing between them, household production, and, socio-cultural or religious beliefs are important aspects of female labour force participation.

The rapid growth in the number of expatriate workers – estimated to be around 80,839 (2008) representing more than 25% of the Maldivian population **and just less than 80% of total Maldivian employment** is becoming an area of concern. There are economic and social implications of such a large contingent of expatriate workers. These relate to labour substitution between locals and expatriates, the outflow of resources through foreign remittances, and socio-cultural differences that are at odds with local customs. Expatriate workers are heavily concentrated in construction, **tourism**, health, education and other social services, and increasingly in wholesale and retail trade.

Youth unemployment is one of the biggest social challenges facing the Maldives. The market has been unable to absorb the growing number of school leavers in recent years as a result of bias towards white-collar work, skills mismatch to the type of jobs available and their lack of experience in employment. The 2007 MDG report underscores the fact that nearly 40% of young women in the 15-24 age group and 20% of young men in the same age group are unemployed. The situation is acute in Malé – 1 out of 5 young women and 1 out of 6 young men is unemployed. Given the limited job opportunities in the Atolls, predictably the situation is worse there – nearly 1 out of 3 young people are unemployed. The problem is inextricably linked with the rising incidence of drug abuse and juvenile delinquency among the youth and the social costs of this situation is cause for serious alarm – not only because it perpetuates existing inequalities, but also due to its impact on future productivity.

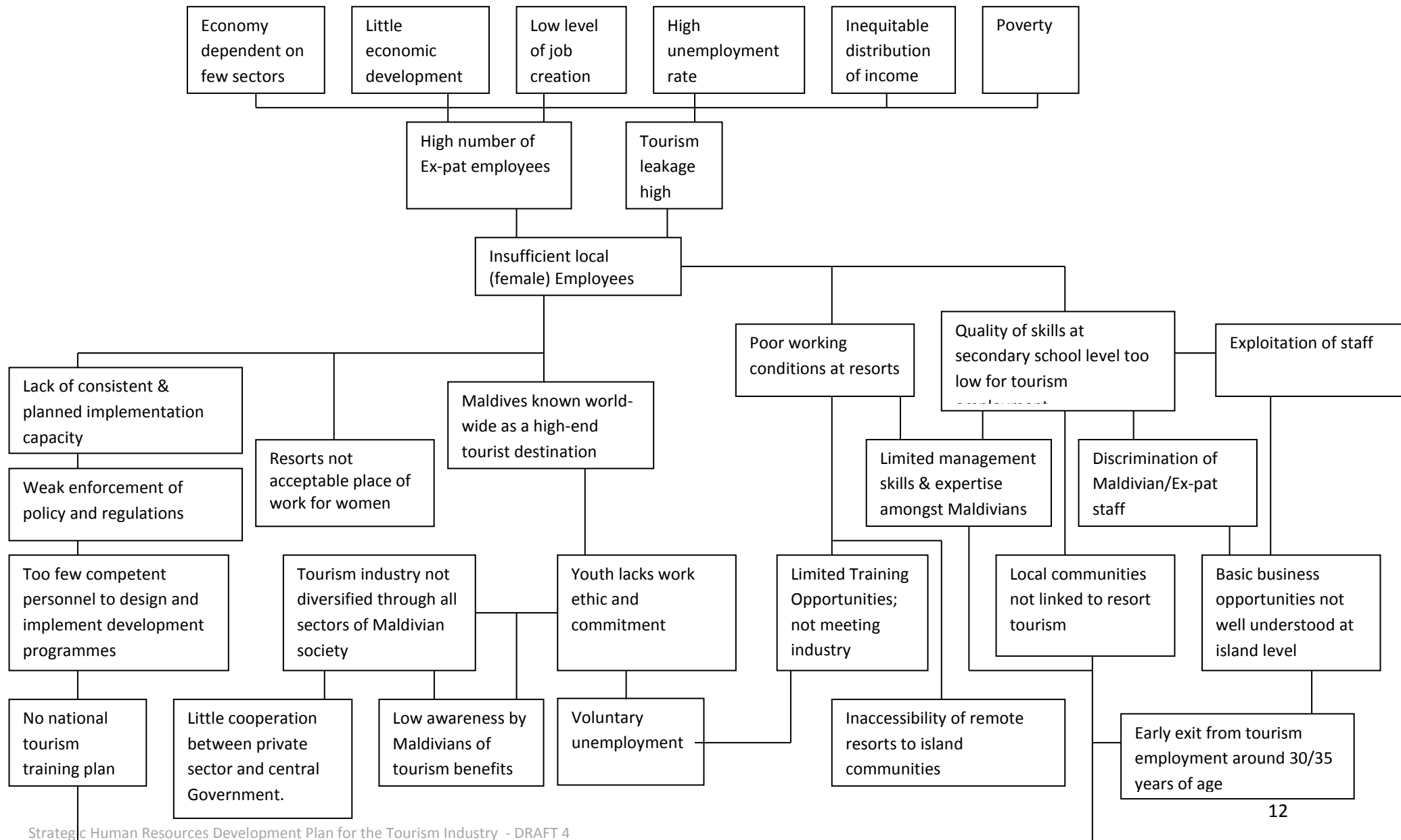
A UNDP/World Bank study on vulnerability and poverty assessment found that households with one or more members working in the tourism sector are more likely to escape the poverty thresholds than other households.

Only 15% of employed Maldivian men and 4% of employed Maldivian women work in this sector (Census 2006): there is no coherent strategy for human resource management and the absorption of Maldivian workers into tourism. Job security, a well-defined career path and benefits, non-discrimination and proximity to home-island or Male are the primary motivating factors for Maldivian job seekers in tourism and the lack of opportunities at the managerial level deters many Maldivians from participating in this critical sector.

Currently, each resort has its own island and supporting infrastructure and imports the bulk of its labour as well as consumption goods from abroad. This limits the dispersion of the fruits of growth to other areas and sectors. Furthermore, an industry perspective on issues associated with local employment is not available for consideration and with an anticipated 76 new resorts to become operational, there is a urgent need for a strategy targeting the human resources' challenges in the tourism industry.

A summary of these issues defines the following problem tree.

Problem Tree: Causes and implication of the current human resources profile in the tourism sector of the Maldives



Situational Analysis

Tourism in the Maldives began in 1972 with a mere 280 beds on 2 resort islands. Since then, the industry has grown rapidly transforming the Maldives into a quintessential island holiday destination with global reputation, winning international acclaim and awards. Sustainable tourism development has been the key to the Maldives success as a tourist destination. Today, tourism accounts for 27 percent of GDP, about 51.5 percent of foreign currency earnings, and for more than 22,000 jobs.

The Republic of the Maldives relies on its tourism sector for the majority of its GDP and direct foreign exchange earnings. The industry is predominantly found in the Malé Atoll where over 40% of industry capacity is located although all atolls have a relevant stake in the sector.

The situational analysis of human resources in the tourism industry in the Maldives needs to be seen within the larger context of the country's geographical, socio-economic aspects, its educational system as well as the regulatory environment.

3.1 INDUSTRY CHARACTERISTICS

Tourism has been essential to the growth of the Maldivian economy experiencing strong growth, averaging about 4.3% (in real terms) per year since 1999. Economic growth in key source markets and the planned development of this sector have transformed it into a world-renowned quality tourist destination. The volume of tourist arrivals grew from 430,000 to 683,000 between 1999 and 2009; an average growth rate of 7.5%. More than 70% of tourists are from Europe (mainly Italy and the U.K). Total tourist arrivals are expected to cross 1 million by 2011/2012 but estimates might be revised in the light of global financial uncertainty.

Investments in the sector, particularly in high-end tourism, have grown rapidly too. Less than half the resorts are managed by Maldivians – the rest operate through joint ventures or foreign ownership. A total of 100 islands had been developed into tourist resorts by the end of June 2011. An additional 76 resorts and hotel development projects have been sanctioned for future development. In addition to upscale tourism, there are provisions being made for city style hotel development and guesthouse facilities in inhabited islands that would also have local effects on development.

Revenues from tourism comprise approximately 28% of total government revenues and tourism brings in nearly 75% of foreign exchange reserves, underlying its importance as a source of finance for development and public expenditures. The tourism sector has been conspicuously affected by the recent financial and economic crises and remains extremely vulnerable to economic fluctuations in source markets.

Official estimates predict a continuing contraction – started with the financial recession of 2009 and continuing bleak economic prospects. Although tourism was expected to rebound in 2010, the Euro zone continues its recession in mid-2011. The squeeze on profits induced by the global crisis has prompted some resort owners to cut costs by making staff redundant or reducing wages. This can have a serious impact on families depending on resort workers for their support. The impact is bound to be worst for small safari boat owners and souvenir shops since lower tourist arrivals as well as lower spending by tourists doubly affect these.

On a larger scale, the contraction in tourism could prove costly to the economy and reduce government revenues at the same time. Given its significance to the economy and public finances, there is a need to diversify tourism on multiple fronts including introducing new products, attracting demand from new markets, encouraging private sector equity participation and enhancing the economic participation of Maldivians in the sector.

Although the current fluctuations in visitor numbers from the classic source markets are being compensated by new markets, the long-term effect remains uncertain. The Chinese market is notoriously unfaithful and holds a distinctly different pattern; shorter stay and less spending at resort level (limited up-selling). However, the sheer volume remains highly valuable for the Maldives. The need for Chinese language proficient staff has become evident.

3.1.1 The Maldivian tourism product

The tourism product of the Maldives is a resort based experience on a (small) tropical island. All resorts offer highly similar facilities and services; luxury accommodation divided into beach and over-water guest units, dive centre, a Spa/Health Centre and a variety of (themed) food & drink outlets as well as sports/recreational activities.

On the global destination map, the Maldives are a high-end destination with quality levels of the resorts high to very high with a few modest establishments. Almost all international renowned hospitality management brands operate at least one resort in the Maldives.

From an employment point of view, this means that the basic skills-set required is almost identical for every single tourism product (resort); the differences are found in the signature (quality) of the resort; often determined by the management company.

The similar, almost identical product of the Maldives means similar job descriptions with limited changes in skills requirements beyond the quality level/signatory approach of individual brands. **This makes external mobility in the industry, staff moving to different resorts for improved remuneration, easy. This higher mobility is stated as a dis-incentive for training investment by resorts unable to compete with the service charges paid at top-end resorts.**

The concept of a single resort on an inhabited island has so far always meant that staff needs to be accommodated on the island as well. Physical space is limited; sharing up to 10 staff members (sometimes more) in a room is common and privacy an exception. The appointment of staff from nearby islands has initiated commuting to/from the work place but numbers are (still) limited. This initiative by individual resort is further restricted by working hours (shifts) and the lack of sufficient staff numbers to make economic sense. Transfers to and from Malé are most frequently available by (supply) vessel or sea plane but transport to resident islands is perceived as time consuming.

The other side of this is that (male) staff is willing to accept resort work with a clear objective to earn enough for a small house or shop; **tourism employment is thereby a time restricted economic effort towards the establishment of an independent livelihood and not a career.** This is the case for

both Maldivians as well as expatriate staff from regional countries (Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Indonesia and the Philippines).

The international managed resorts are guided primarily by corporate directions from head office which is not always in line with local characteristics and expectations. The refusal of some international brands to employ women wearing the buruga is an example of this.

3.1.2 International competitive advantage

With the rapid re-emergence of Sri Lanka as a tourism destination and the growth of the hospitality sector in China and India, the supply of skilled expatriates willing to work in the Maldives is likely to come under pressure in the years ahead. In Sri Lanka, there are first indications that the remuneration is improving and differences with foreign employment becoming smaller.

There are additional changes in tourism generating markets that effect the HR requirements in the Maldives. The rapid growth of China as a tourist producing market requires language proficiency amongst front-line staff; especially in activity based positions such as water-sports, child care and F&B service.

In the European markets there is a growing awareness of the sustainable character of tourism; fair trade, sustainable tourism is becoming an accredited/certified product which involves the participation of the host community in the industry. Especially amongst international brands, this issue is being picked-up which translates into pro-active local staff recruitment and career plans in addition to the environmental sustainability around marine resources. The international management brand are therefore more actively seeking the engagement of local employees and become the preferred choice for those Maldivian staff members with an appropriate mix of ambition and skills. The preferred 'localisation' of the industry is thereby showing signs of becoming clustered amidst the international leading brands. Combined with the disincentive for staff training at other (local) resorts, this creates a challenge in career development and skills enhancement amongst the majority of operations.

3.1.3 Local employment demand

As the Maldives' tourism product is a high-end product, virtually every rung of the corporate ladder requires professional training to some extent. There have been claims by industry stakeholders that skilled locals are not available to cater to this demand for professionally trained staff.

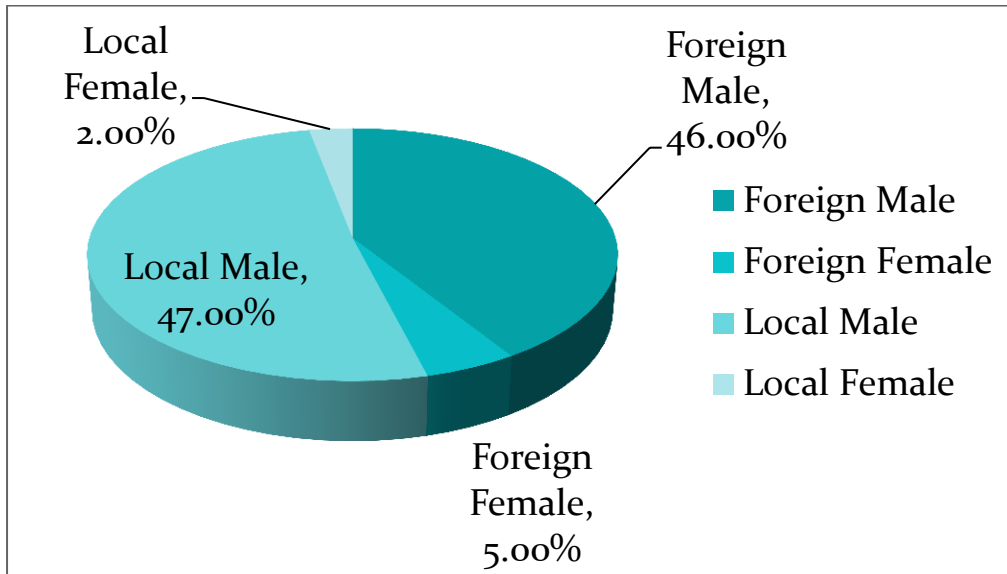
The unwillingness of locals to work in the tourism sector is also still based on the prevalence of poor staff facilities and minimal benefits in the industry. Meals and accommodation often do not meet expectations of local staff, transportation to and from local islands is infrequent and salaries are minimal in all but the most high end properties.

There is an obvious discrepancy between the claims of potential employees and employers regarding the level of effort in recruiting Maldivians. The industry claims that Maldivians are not interested; community members state they are not aware of opportunities. This constitutes more than anything else a communication challenge to be overcome. Recent strikes at resort properties are have added to the perception of hoteliers that local employees are a potential risk to business operations.

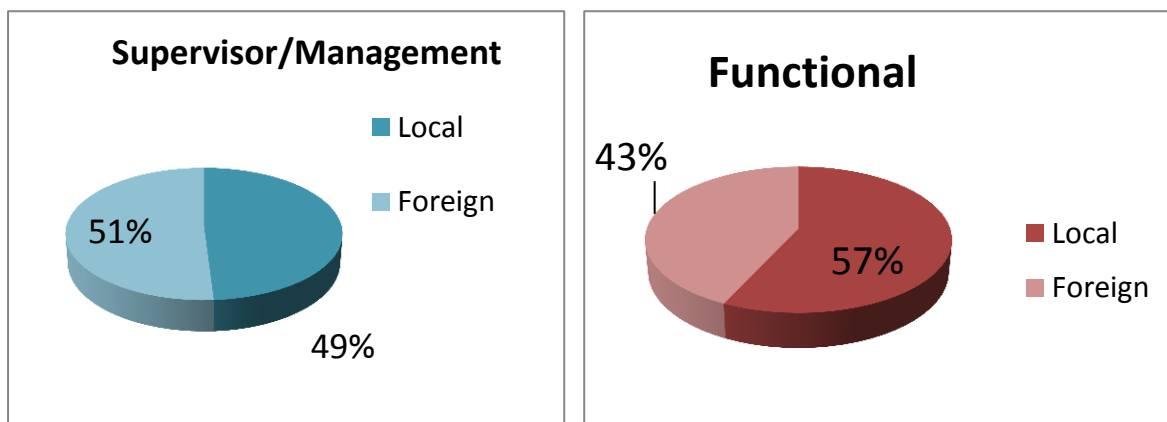
Resorts need people to work at various posts and these posts can be either vacant (vacancies) or filled (jobs). **This is the demand side of labour and the statistical unit is a job.** An individual, occupying a post, performs the work by supplying his labour in return for payment in cash or in kind. **This is the supply side of labour and the statistical unit is a person employed.** Payment for the work

performed translates into income for those employed and into part of labour costs for their employer.

The current industry employment figure is based on the combination of Ministry data and the latest available household survey that lists resort employment. A total of 25,908 (August) includes 13,195 expatriate employees:



Further applicable divisions relate to the position within the resort operation:



The government has recently revised the quota system from 50:50 to 55:45 between foreigners and locals recently. In addition, the government has increased the ratio of bed to employees from (1:1.2) to (1:1.5) to increase employment opportunities in the sector.

If the higher ratio is applied, the industry could employ a total of 27,034 staff with a current maximum expatriate staff contingency in the tourism industry of 14,868 which means an increase in the current number of expatriate employees.

3.1.4 Future developments

By mid-2011, there are 100 resorts operational in the Maldives, offering 21,628 beds. Government has leased an additional 76 resorts, which, once operational, brings bed capacity in the Maldives to over 33,000. The change from bed-rent to land-rent also enables resorts to expand capacity (beds) without paying more fees to government, provided they staff within the allowed percentage of built-up area on the island. This potential increase in capacity is not recorded.

[Table: regional spread of guest units/beds]

Atoll	Resorts	%	Current Beds	%	Planned Resorts	Cumulated Resorts Share %	Planned Beds	Cumulated Bed Share %
Ha (Alif)	3	3	456	2.1	4	4.0	600	3.1
Ha (Dhaalu)	0	0	0	0	6	3.4	1500	4.4
Shaviyani	0	0	0	0	6	3.4	1070	3.2
Noonu	2	2	542	2.5	8	5.7	1380	5.7
Raa	1	1	470	2.2	9	5.7	640 ¹	3.3
Baa	7	7	1398	6.5	5	6.8	1000	7.2
Lhaviyani	4	4	1336	6.2	2	3.4	700	6.1
Malé North	29	29	6444	29.8	1	17.0	200	19.9
Malé South	14	14	2606	10.7	0	8.0	0	7.8
Alif North	11	11	1988	9.2	0	6.3	0	5.9
Alif South	16	16	3768	17.4	0	9.1	0	11.4
Vaavu	2	2	350	1.6	1	1.7	50	1.2
Meemu	2	2	400	1.8	1	1.7	60	1.4
Faafu	1	1	250	1.1	0	0.6	0	0.7
Dhaalu	2	2	436	2.0	4	3.4	670	3.3
Thaa	0	0	0	0	5	2.8	780	2.3
Laamu	1	1	66	0.3	4	2.8	550	1.8
Gaaf North	3	3	288	1.3	8	6.3	1078	4.1
Gaaf South	0	0	0	0	9	5.1	1254	3.7
Gnaviyani	0	0	0	0	1	0.6	120	0.4
Seenu	2	2	830	3.8	2	2.2	210	3.1
Total	100	100%	21,628	100%	76	100%	11,862	100%

Highlighted numbers show highest concentrations of resort (beds) as well as steepest increase.

If the current and allowed ratios are applied to the projected number of new resort development, following applies:

¹ There are 4 resorts with unknown number of beds at this stage. 640 is the bed capacity of the remaining 5 resorts

	Assumption	Local	Expatriate
Total current employees	Estimate	12,713	13,195
Total required employees at full capacity of planned resorts	Staff/bed ration 1:1.5 Local/expat 45:55	17,078	20,872
Total required enrolment based on staff turnover per annum	12% annually	2,050	2,500
Total required staff based on skills set	Management (6.2%)	942	1411
	Supervisory (13.5%)	2,766	2,357
	Functional (80.3%)	1,5542	14,931
Total required staff in full capacity of planned resorts based on current ratio		19,250	18,699



The Maldives require the engagement of an additional 7,000 nationals combined with full retention of the current workforce to merely sustain the current 45-55 quota of local to expatriate employees. This means an increase of over 50% of the current number of Maldivian employed!

3.2 GEOGRAPHY

The geographical feature of the Maldives with its 1190 islands means that the vast majority of staff is required to reside away from home while working in the industry. The geography also requires self-contained resort development that create a high demand for technical skills in the engineering field; water desalination, power, electricity, mechanical, etc.

One of the biggest challenges is however found in the absence of population centres that create sufficient economies of scale for the delivery of training in a continuous way. It also affects staff recruitment processes and general relations between resorts and neighbouring communities as the resort islands create parallel systems which raises the threshold of employment demand.

The geographical disbursement of the population of the Maldives makes the provision of service delivery difficult and efforts around training & recruitment are concentrated at Malé with limited interventions available at the 16 islands that have a population of over 2,000 residents.

Although government has made it a priority to provide transport appropriate to the demand across the country, the reality entails limited frequency and routes linking the various atolls.

3.3 SOCIO-CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT

The lack of demand for jobs also stems from the fact that locals are not willing to engage in the tourism sector. There is a general perception among locals that the tourism sector is associated with several immoral and unethical practices. This is one of the major causes of the lack of female employees in the tourism sector, which amounts to less than 5% of total employees.

The on-site living conditions at resorts further create objections from family members based on the socio-religious context of an Islamic state. This means that demand for resort based jobs is limited, and extremely limited amongst women, and that service/ career length is shortened and ends when family planning becomes a priority, somewhere before 35th birthday.

The Islamic sharia rule of the Maldives makes it difficult for many people to feel comfortable in a resort where alcohol is served, almost only male employees reside and visitors are dressed in beach clothing. In addition, both sexes still expect women to play the traditional role at the house, especially when married. As Maldivian marry young (very young in international comparison), women are almost automatically excluded from the potential workforce.

Various studies have been conducted in the last seven years around youth & employment attitudes². Although survey based results indicate that although youth consult with parents regarding employment, they do make their own choices.

This seems contrary to industry statements. Motivated young people who visit resorts and express interest and commitment in resort employment, even reaching verbal agreement with resort management, still cancel at the 11th hour due to social influences.

Participation in training is also no guarantee for actual industry engagement. Even the completion of training courses is no guarantee for industry engagement whether conducted at a training institute or even at resort level.

The actual identification of career interest is often still vague even after training as reported by the industry. The consulted training institutions also identify an uncertainty amongst students about the application of their newly learned skills and knowledge. Several statements have been made that training is a 'nice way of passing the time'.

This assessment fits well with the industry statement about a distinct lack of ambition among the vast majority of Maldivian employees which seems to be rooted deep in society. The well-documented preference for white colour jobs where (before civil service reform) career development is determined by the institutions and not the individual confirms this further.

There is also a general acceptance that the provision of 'sick leave' in the labour law provides for additional holidays and the maximum number of 30 often becomes an objective more than provision which, to the industry, is seen as a reflection of (the lack of) motivation and mitigated measures are put in place around 'extended weekend'.

The high level of unemployment, whether voluntary or real, is directly linked to growing social challenges in Malé as well as the atolls. The primary challenge relates to instances of drug use and crime. Crime increases due to simple, powerful reasons; unemployed people have time to get involved. Without work, and with the often crowded domestic setting, (young) people take to the streets. Add to that the sign of the times whereby people are not judge on what they DO, but on what they HAVE with mobile items such as phones, mp3 players and clothing becoming most valued and easy targets of (petty) crime (Prof. Bagguley, Leeds University).

A high instance of general 'voluntary unemployment' occurs in the Maldives and the current social & family network provides a livelihood for many (young) Maldivians and takes away the incentive to become economically active.

The absence of an actual necessity to 'work for a living' creates a challenge for the country. Within that challenge, the tourism industry has to overcome an additional perception that hospitality is an inappropriate industry and 'only fit for drop-outs'.

Overall, the socio-cultural environment constitutes a hurdle for young school leavers and reduces the potential workforce (= job demand) and subsequently, the employment gap to be filled becomes even bigger.

² See list of references in annex CCC

Research conducted³ shows that although resort based employment opportunities for women exist, it does not mean that Maldivian women enter the workforce of a resort. The Maldivian situation is more complex. Cultural and religious differences are highly influencing factors to why women's participation in the resort sector is remarkably low. The culture of the western resorts and the Muslim local islands differ in terms of values, practices and religious beliefs. The resorts are by many Maldivians perceived as an "evil" industry due to the presence of alcohol, pork and nudity, which are not compatible with the religion of Islam. Furthermore the resorts are seen as unsuitable places for women to work in, due to the skewed male/female ratio of employees and the fear of women's safety, and possibilities for extramarital sexual encounters. These perceptions and fears are especially reinforced by the protectiveness of family members.

Furthermore, challenges for women to do business with the resorts as entrepreneurs were found to be the lack of awareness of the market and lack of communication between women and resorts.

The Faculty of Tourism & Hospitality Studies offers a variety of hospitality related trainings:

- Certificate III in Pasty and Bakery
- Certificate III in Food and Drinks Services
- Certificate III in Accommodation Operations
- Certificate III in From Office Operations
- Certificate II in Front Office Operations
- Certificate II in Food and Drinks Services
- Certificate II in Accommodation Operations
- BTEC National Diploma in Hotel Catering and Institutional Operations
- BTEC National Diploma in Travel and Tourism
- BTEC Higher National Diploma in Hospitality Management

It is important to place these challenges in the overall context of women's role in Maldivian society. There exist no social provision of childcare in the country and it is common that the men are working in other locations than their home islands. Hence, many women have no choice but to stay at home and take care of the households. For women with families, an entrepreneurial relationship with a resort island seems to be more appropriate compared to direct employment in the resorts because it allows for combining work and family life. Thus, efforts to include women should be diversified by creating different innovative inclusive business models that are cultural and gender sensitive to the Maldivian context. The role of (island-based) external organisations has been demonstrated as useful in establishing partnerships between women (groups) and resorts.

3.4 EDUCATION SYSTEM

There are, and have been, numerous attempts to educate and train people for the tourism and hospitality industry. The overarching challenge is not related to the contents of the courses but the inability to ensure regular, planned and consistent training delivery and produce (as discussed) individuals actually **willing** to take-up employment even after training. It must be argued that part of the education and training efforts should be the ability to create interest in the topic of tourism and hospitality. These challenges occur already in

³ Lund University: "CHALLENGES OF INCLUDING WOMEN IN THE MALDIVIAN RESORT SECTOR": Eva Alm & Susanna Johansson. May 2011

the school system and continue throughout tertiary education systems.

The current secondary school curriculum clearly does not meet those objectives. It is a 'Travel' based curriculum from the UK and is no reflection of the characteristics of tourism (and specifically hospitality) in the Maldives. Anecdotal evidence highlights the prevalence of foreign teachers for the tourism subject which limits the possibility to adapt the curriculum to the local context of the Maldives as such knowledge is lacking.

The Faculty of Tourism & Hospitality offers a variety of technically sound certificate and diploma courses (see text box previous page). The actual course delivery is somewhat ad-hoc and inconsistent due to the challenge of enrolling sufficient students and the high drop-out rate within the first few weeks. As discussed under 'Industry Characteristics', there is no direct reward for having completed formal training as remuneration in the industry is position, and no skill/experience based, in the entry level. Although these training courses could be a perfect stepping stone for faster career development within resort tourism (and thereby having a head-start compared to non-trained staff), the lack of career thinking hampers the perception of such pre-joining training efforts.

Several private colleges and NGOs support hospitality training efforts around the Maldives. The schedule, course content and delivery is often dependent on either (donor) funding or sponsorship. The Salaam School, with support of CIDA, offers Malé-based youth who originate from the islands, the opportunity to participate in Food & Beverage, National Certificate Level II Training with an ambitious, but commendable gender division of 5 males and 15 females.

Two comprehensive human resource studies have been conducted in the past: Human Resources Study of 2005 by PINZ/R.Castley and the Human Resources Needs study of 2007 by Clique Associates. They both identify the challenging delivery of appropriate curriculum at secondary and tertiary level and the decreasing numbers of participants in tertiary education & training. These trends have continued into 2011 and the efforts of institution based training seem further removed from industry requirements than ever before.

This has also prompted the development of resort based training institutions and formalised apprenticeship programmes. The latter has been spearheaded by the Four Seasons Maldives who has almost reached 200 successful graduated students (late 2011) and a management training programme has been introduced by Taj Exotica in cooperation with the Institute of Hotel Management in Aurangabad, India.

The Villa Group has established a Faculty of Hospitality Management & Tourism Studies, located at the 'Knowledge Village' on Sun Island Resort & Spa, situated in South Ari Atoll. The faculty aims to prepare industry ready graduates with quality educational programmes that are MQA (Maldivian Qualification Authority) approved and provide a right mix of international expectations whilst meeting the immediate needs of the Maldivian hospitality industry. The faculty has just become operational (late 2011) and courses on offer are:

- Certificate level 2 programme for Waiters & Waitresses (TVET).
- Certificate level 2 programme for Receptionists (TVET).
- Certificate level 2 programme for Room Boys (TVET).
- Executive Certificate level 3 programme in Food & Beverage Management.
- Executive Certificate level 3 programme in Rooms Division Management.
- Executive Certificate level 3 programme in Event Management.
- Certificate level 4 programme in International Hospitality & Tourism Management.
- Foundation programme in International Hospitality & Tourism Management.
- Diploma in International Hospitality & Tourism Management.

Two licences for 'training resorts' have been awarded to Nolvivaramfaru and Gan/Bodu/Gasfinolhu Islands but both are not operational yet.

Actual resort based training is on the increase and more and more operations are structuring quantifiable inputs and outputs into human resource development and offer scholarships to staff. Where the earlier human resource studies identified the lack of coordination and dialogue amongst industry and training institution, **there currently seems a lack of coordination and dialogue amongst resorts which prevents individual resort efforts from becoming an industry-based training approach that reflects current market demand.**

3.5 THE REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT

The new constitution (2008) grants the right to work, organize trade unions, the right to strike and prohibits forced labour and discrimination. In May 2009, Maldives became a member of the ILO and is in the process of developing labour legislation, labour administration, increasing labour market data and information, and initiating elements of social dialogue, tripartite negotiation and collective bargaining to increase capacity and set up mechanisms to deal with labour relations and dispute resolution.

The tourism act (including amendment) and employment act are the main regulatory instruments that guide the operational level in which human resources function within the industry. Although human resources are notably absent in the tourism act, both documents are a solid enough basis for guiding the industry.

Where the regulatory environment fails in creating a conducive environment for the advancement of human resources in the tourism industry is on its organisational level, long-term consistency and stakeholder communication.

Long-term plans (tourism master plan, economic development plan) are formulated but do not become operational and contradicting decisions are taken. Limited dialogue exists between strategic stakeholders in the industry; Ministry of Tourism, Arts & Culture, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Human Resources Youth & Sports and Ministry of Economic Development. Mandates seem to change regularly and with the Government Public Service reform, although accepted as a necessity, technical capacities have been weakened and no guidance for organisational structures, minimum staffing and/or mandates exists.

The Ministry of Tourism's tourism department is understaffed and has lost positions (not merely staff) essential to carry out its mandate. Similar developments have occurred at the Ministry of Human Resources, Youth and Sports. Ministerial tasks are characterised by reactionary interventions and lack capacity to plan and implement efforts around human resource development for the industry.

The reasons for the drastic government reforms are clearly documented but the reality of diminished planning, implementation and control (enforcement) functions at ministerial level need to be taken into account when formulating a realistic strategic plan.

Combined with the introduction of trade unions, labour courts & arbitration, accountabilities and responsibilities are being tested, it should bring the tourism industry closer together to ensure synergy. This is not the case to date, and the industry remains a collection of individual resorts and not a common voice. At the same time, and contrary to the tourism master plans and the Ministry mandate, new resort developments are being initiated without any understanding of carrying capacities, market demands or human resources development implications.

A key aspect of the current human resources situation in tourism relates to the Work Permit Quota System for expatriate workers in the tourism industry. The actual quota has been changes recently contradicting the 'localisation drive' by government without due consideration of time-line. The actual administrative process keeps changing making it difficult for the industry to plan ahead.

There are currently no structured planning systems around tourism, not within the industry and not within government. The current default in land-rent payments to the Maldives Inland Revenue Authority are testing the relationship between industry and government further in addition to causing real financial constraints for government.

The many interventions to date that target the human resources situation in the Maldives have been stuck in well-intended **cooperation** efforts by have failed to ensure **coordination and compatibility** and have focussed too much on producing numbers of trained people and less on structural changes to the tourism system in the Maldives in pursuit of proper **integration**.

- **Cooperation** – joint action and collaboration to achieve a shared advantage
- **Coordination** – harmonious conjunction of action so that the action of any member does not put at risk the performance of any other
- **Compatibility** – capability to co-exist in an integrated manner
- The achievement of these three levels ensures **INTEGRATION**

3.6. SWOT SUMMARY

The situational analysis related to human resources can be summarised as follows:

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Globally significant attractions ✓ Individual training efforts ✓ Innovative HR approaches ✓ Structured career development at individual resorts/management groups ✓ Presence of international brands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No industry-wide approach & framework ▪ Unclear mandates ▪ Limited industry organisation ▪ Inappropriate school curriculum ▪ Weak training institutions ▪ No tourism benefits for atoll economies ▪ Poor soft skills amongst school-leavers
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + President's Office training initiative + High number of planned resort development + Interpretive requirements create income generating opportunities + 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parallel universe - Lack of industry <> government dialogue - Religious fundamental influences - Market decline - Declining island populations - High number of school leavers - Lack of planning & enforcement

International Lessons

The unique character of the Maldives makes comparison difficult. The combination of an ethnically homogenous Islamic state, sparsely populated, divided over several 120 populated islands but with 36% of the population residing in the capital Malé and with no natural assets beyond the marine resources is only found once in the world.

The comparison with small island states is an obvious one but falls short as a single case study. Lessons from the Islamic world need to be assessed but none have the track-record in tourism that the Maldives have. International best practice therefore needs to come from a variety of observations from elsewhere:

The **Caribbean** has for the last 15 years tried to formulate a regional tourism & hospitality curriculum. The aim of the curriculum emphasises the business and technical skills needed for a career in the industry. This is facilitated in part by the involvement of industry professionals in the programme and the provision of practical training through an apprenticeship and internship programme. There is consensus among stakeholders that the region requires tourism knowledge in the curriculum that embraces the whole field of tourism studies, both tourism business studies and non-tourism business studies. The rationale here is that this balance in knowledge enables students to better analyse the tourism phenomenon in the islands and places them in a better position to make informed decisions as potential leaders regarding the growth of tourism.

Emphasis is further placed on the provision of immediate functional competencies such as:

- An entrepreneurial and innovative attitude to work;
- A good overall knowledge of the business and competitive environments in the industry;
- Strong people skills;
- Language and cultural sophistication, awareness and appreciation;
- A strong sense of social obligations and environmental responsibilities of the industry;
- Strong self-learning orientation;
- Respect for vocational work;
- A self-conscious identification with the industry (problems and solutions).

The challenges between **Islam and Tourism** have been documented for various generating – and destination countries. One of the applicable observations is the difference in approach by government levels. Contrasting actions at state and local (island/atoll) government structures occur. The federal government is shown to place a high priority on meeting the needs of tourists while certain regional government structures in Malaysia, Iran, and Indonesia give precedence to the

dictates of religion. On international level, initiatives seek to promote intra-Islamic travel and the marketing of Islamic destinations is often shaped towards classic, non-Islamic, source markets.

Muslim nations face the task of striking a balance between pleasing tourists and achieving possibly much needed economic gains whilst ensuring that religious requirements are respected. Although there are special political dynamics at work in that conservative Islam is gaining ground around the world, creating potential for conflict between Muslim residents and non-Muslim international tourists.

While national authorities extend an enthusiastic hand to visitors, those at work in the tourism industry within destinations such as Iran, Dubai, Brunei and their principal markets are made aware of the changing conditions regarding tourism within their socio-political setting and have enhanced their appreciation of religious sensitivities, helping to educate tourists about appropriate behaviour. There is scope for consultation with religious features, regarding the formulation of codes of conduct of tourist sites which helps in making tourism an acceptable national phenomenon.

The difficulties of establishing a consensus is well documented in Malaysia cannot be neglected; however, the struggle to enforce Shariah law is another source of unease, although state institutions state that only Muslims would be subject to its rules and regulations. Further studies are stated by many to be necessary to fully estimate the effects and outcomes of media reporting as well as attitudes amongst official decision makers.

In the context of tourism, different Islamic markets exist rather than one single Islamic tourist market. In the last two decades, diverse concepts for development of the tourism industry have been implemented in various Islamic countries. The character of tourists' activities (leisure, cultural, pilgrim/religious, medical, shopping, etc.) and the countries of tourists' origin point to four main concepts of tourism development in Islamic countries: 1) European/North American-oriented leisure tourism (Tunisia, Maldives); 2) Arab-oriented leisure tourism (Lebanon); 3) multi-ethnic-oriented mixed-character tourism (Egypt, Morocco, Jordan, UAE); and 4) multi-ethnic-oriented cultural and pilgrim tourism (Saudi Arabia, Syria, Palestine).

In European/North-American Leisure Oriented markets, visitors are often not aware of existing cultural conflicts and merely enjoying their holiday. They do not have either hostile or negative attitudes towards the locals, nor do they seek contact with them. Lack of dialogue and personal contact prevents any possible understanding of the "other" by both sides. Since tourism is one of the most important and vital forms of an intercultural dialogue, this type of intercultural misunderstanding has affected the development of the tourism industry in Islamic countries and this market segment forms the big losers after international acts of terror or the current Arab Spring (Tunisia and Morocco).

International tourism will continue to face numerous crises and problems as long as militarism and violence dominate in the region. Various marketing and promotional campaigns serve to relieve the pressure on the tourism sector (Egypt) and international and regional cooperation and coordination at different levels can provide an institutional background for crisis management. **Nevertheless, the core problem of the tourism industry has a structural character: very weak domestic tourism and poorly developed intra-regional tourism.**

Proposed Strategic Actions

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Maldivians are at the centre of concerns for sustainable development and thus significant attention must be given to strategic interventions that will enhance the quality of human life in the Maldives. Interventions should be undertaken with a view to not only the contribution that employment can make but more importantly how tourism interventions will ultimately affect the well-being of those living in all island of the Maldives.

The size and vulnerability of any small island developing State necessitates that special attention be paid to population issues, education and training for human resource development. The need for attention to human resource development issues is demonstrated by low levels of female participation in development; the current insufficiency of education, information and means, as appropriate, for the responsible planning of individual and family livelihoods.

In addition, the uncounted costs of increases in drug abuse & related crime include rising health costs, increased unemployment and the diversion of scarce human resources. High population densities and growth, as well as depopulation in some atolls, are constraints to achieving sustainable development in the Maldives. Increasing attention must be given to the concept of island/atoll carrying capacity and environmental health, especially for fragile and highly populated environments in the urban area of Malé.

Other guiding principles around tourism that form a foundation for a beneficial human resources development strategy are based on benefit streams. The revenue from tourism must remain in the Maldives economy as much as possible. Policies that ensure minimum economic leakage are essential and staff/salary leakage in the Maldives are part of this. Although taxation policies, entrepreneurial subsidies and investment incentives are all useful tools to strengthen the tourism economy, the overall budgetary constraints in 2011 and tourism income not meeting government projections makes the financial authority reluctant to provide any financial incentives.

As tourism income does not stay within the island/atoll level area, the tourism system is to be redesigned. At atoll level, a fair share of (tourism) revenue should be received to ensure that a local economic system of products and services (staff pool) remains close to the tourism resorts. Resorts can be catalysts of local economic development and if planned well, can avoid the commoditisation of indigenous island culture. Community integration is key to successful and sustainable tourism meaning that island residents need to be involved.

It is a matter of high priority to strengthen national attitude and to facilitate the flow of information on resort tourism issues, enhance public awareness and encourage participation in tourism industry.

It is in this light, that the strategy proposes four different intervention levels:

- [1] Ensure an increase in the potential pool of tourism employees through attitude and interest change, attractive remuneration and stimulating demand for truly Maldivian resort products. This intervention should ensure that **MORE** Maldivians are available for tourism employment.
- [2] Ensure an improvement in technical training contents and delivery and subsequent linkages into a career path development institutionalised within the industry. This intervention should ensure that employees are **BETTER** suited, present at all industry levels and participate longer in the industry.
- [3] Ensure that benefits from tourism occur outside the formal employment setting by providing income generating opportunities at the atoll value chain for local producers of goods and services with a special emphasis on women. This intervention should ensure that **DIFFERENT** Maldivians are benefitting from tourism.
- [4] Ensure that mechanisms, policy and regulations are in place that ensures implementation of the targets and objectives. This target should ensure that **CONTROL** exists at all levels and amongst stakeholders.

5.2 INCREASE INTEREST IN TOURISM LABOUR

Challenge: Overcoming the reservations towards tourism employment by addressing (mis-) perceptions and social/cultural reservations.

Target: By emphasising the possibilities of employment in the industry for young school-leavers, the working conditions, career opportunities, diversity, international exposure, remuneration, etc. the interest in working for the tourism sector is to be enhanced with special emphasis on the sections where Maldivians are under-represented.

Annual target of 2000 school-leavers to apply for resort industry entry: training, apprenticeship or between 2012 and 2015

Following actions are proposed:

5.2.1 CURRICULUM ENHANCED

Education is a key tool in the achievement of environmental and social sustainability of the tourism industry in the Maldives and the role of well-educated, trained and motivated hospitality and tourism professionals has become crucial to the success of the sector.

As in many other emerging economies, the curriculum used in the Maldives has a wrong focus with a 'travel' focussed Cambridge Travel & Tourism Curriculum (2002) currently in use.

What is required is to develop a curriculum that responds to the challenges and threats that the Maldives tourism system faces from globalisation and its effects on the socio-economic and cultural setting of the island nation. Such a curriculum should encompass the needs of individuals who are influenced by (communities) and can affect the development of tourism (Ministry of Islamic Affairs).

The framework conceptualised above is the merger of a vocational and an academic approach. Vocational training aims to produce graduates that can be readily recruited by the labour market and make a contribution to the business objectives around profitability or any other target of a tourism organisation. The needs of the industry are emphasised in achieving adequately prepared

graduates with appropriate knowledge and skills. **Within vocational training structures, the emphasis is on students “becoming operation” (job ready) and making a smooth transition into the industry.**

A tourism curriculum that focuses on the academic space of the figure [right] relates to a holistic understanding of tourism as a phenomenon and not just as an industry and sees the value and negative impacts for the nation. This is where consumer wants, supplier expertise, host communities, place of government and the environment become important. Such an approach moves away from the ‘taken the tourism dollar’ ideology within which tourism operates and looks at the broader well-being of the host nation.

Tourism stakeholders (broad) have two main roles in the education process; first to influence the strategic direction of education in tourism and second, to measure performance. Stakeholders are every group that can influence or be influenced by tourism.

Resort Sector	Students	Interest Group (Youth)	Island Community
Safari & Operators	VOCATIONAL [ACTION]	ACADEMIC [PLANNING]	Environmentalist
Professional bodies			Academics (social)
Academics (business)	Transport Sector	Government	Interest Group (female)

Vocational & Academic Curriculum Structure

Stakeholders have different interest that can influence the limits/boundaries/framework of the tourism curriculum as drawn in the figure above. The left side (dark) constitutes the industry and associated stakeholders with a **commercial** interest that supports vocational curriculum. To the right, are the influence of environmentalists, island communities and the government with a broad outlook on tourism and its **overall value to the nation**.

Documented stakeholder statements include:

- Residents become concerned that the Maldives is becoming too influenced by other/Western societies. Local ethics and values are being lost, principles forgotten and basic values that constitute the moral fibre of Maldivian society are lost.
- If the Maldives are being developed through tourism, some of what makes-up the Maldives is eradicated by that in a pursuit to accommodate the metropolitan tourist to a possible scenario where local and foreign cultures become indistinguishable. This in turn can lead to loss of identify and cultural erosion.
- Industry stakeholders stating that there is a need for an enhanced skills orientation. In the past, the industry was perceived as an industry without the need for technical skills but merely a collection of vocational skills. Today, things are becoming highly technical and sophisticated and this requires different/ sharper individuals able to collect a diverse set of skills.
- The expat issue in tourism; ex-pat managers are not necessarily familiar with the management culture in the Maldives. Good local people are blocked in career development due to ex-pats who have limited interest to share skills with local employees as there is no incentive to do so. They portray a culture of playing things close to their chest.
- Possible growing influence from religious structures and Ministry of Islamic affairs.

These, and other issues, should be reflected in the curriculum development to ensure they provide a clear reflection of what the stakeholders in the Maldives expect/experience and know of tourism.

There are different aims that need to be reflected in the development of appropriate curriculum. At the vocational level, emphasis is placed on preparing leaders for the Maldivian industry with a particular focus on entrepreneurship – even if people work for a company the mind-set of the entrepreneur should be understood. General transferable skills like a foreign language, creative writing, team-building, communication, presentation skills and IT skills are required as well as a clear understanding and practical experience in the quality of service delivery.

At the Academic level, preparing students to deliver better tourism services with a high level of professionalism that reflect a positive attitude towards the industry. Ensure people are able to contribute to the creation of an improved tourism system on the islands with people that want to work **FOR** tourism and not **IN** tourism.

In short, curriculum requirements can be summarised as:

- To prepare students for key managerial roles in the tourism industry
- To prepare students to develop and impart quality service
- To develop transferable skills
- To develop the student's ability to think flexibly and critically
- To gain a holistic understanding of tourism
- To develop a practical understanding of preserving the natural environment
- To enable the student to understand his/her role in national development
- To prepare students to contribute to the overall planning of tourism development

To some extent, on an academic level, the individual career prospects come second to being adequately prepared for making a contribution to sustainable development of tourism on the islands.

An appropriate tourism curriculum for the Maldives will address three criteria; [1] ensuring a better service delivery and creating an improved tourism industry, [2] responding to the development challenges of the Maldives with specific emphasis on atoll level community development and [3] being a reflection of the key concerns of the Maldivian society with special emphasis on the youth and females.

The development of appropriate curriculum on primary, secondary and tertiary level goes far beyond the formulation of an academic programme. Given the importance of tourism to the island economies, tourism education takes on a new meaning that spans beyond the boundaries of the classroom and the work environment in the industry, to embrace wider economic and socio-cultural issues that are important in the development of tourism and island livelihoods. Educators must be aware of the fact that what is appropriate for the tourism curriculum is directly linked to what is important for tourism development in the country and each single island. Therefore, stakeholder involvement in curriculum decision-making has to be a central part of the whole curriculum development process if tourism education is to contribute to the sustainable development of the tourism industry.

In short, the Maldives must infuse sustainable tourism ideas into education curricula at all levels and promote participation by all groups, emphasizing the link between resort hospitality and social and economic issues, and continue to improve access to vocational and technical training.

Tasks		
5.2.1.1	Essay Competition on tourism in the Maldives	Foundation for a truly MV tourism & hospitality curriculum; some prize money (possibly sponsored); once off but repeated every 5 years to check perception change
5.2.1.2	Resort visit programme from Grade 9-11	Formalised programme standardised by the industry around employment opportunities and conditions with emphasis on kitchen, maintenance, non-hospitality skills. One school visit to resort every month on a dedicated day (e.g. every third Thursday of the month except for holidays). Schedule prepared a year in advance and published at Island Council Office and schools. Parents/brothers to visit resorts with scholars from grade 10-11.
5.2.1.3	Atoll relevant module incorporated	Heritage, entrepreneurship, economic linkages, resort spin-off that are true reflections of the situation at a specific
5.2.1.4	Employment market access module	Employment, application, presentation, etc. Strong emphasis on the concept of “working for a living”.
5.2.1.5	Soft skills modules	Communication, personal care, time-management, self-reflection and gender.
5.2.1.6	Improved technical curriculum content	Field exposure to inhabited island attraction, safari boat, resort, F&B outlet.

5.2.2 NATIONAL AWARENESS DRIVE TOWARDS ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

To overcome the socio-cultural barrier that creates the negative perception towards working in the tourism industry, an awareness drive is required in the country.

The diversity of working in tourism needs to be made clear to prospective employment seekers. As the industry employs such a variety of skills and trades, ranging from bookkeepers to technicians in the field of engines, electronics and security as well as therapists and captains, the awareness drive should be based on trade positions opposed to industry employment. A variety of print and new media (Facebook, Twitter) should be used to get the message across; for example: “I maintain 500 AC units, I handle US\$ 1 million every day, I drive 100 km every day”.

To overcome the image that tourism is a ‘foreign’ phenomena that goes against Maldivian values, a Maldivian face must be given to the industry. This is best achieved by ensuring current ‘faces’ (current employees) are spreading the message of the values and benefits of working in tourism to amongst Maldivian society by using a variety of communication channels and opportunities.

Islands and atolls form the best entry point to try and change perception as direct linkages with environmental settings, resorts and people can be made to which community members can relate. This moves the topic of tourism out of a theoretical (often wrong) perspective into a tangible element of people’s livelihood.

It is advised to create a phased approach to enhancing the interest in tourism by targeting themes and activities that are related to tourism and hold a stronger place in Maldivian (island) livelihoods. Issues around climate, environment, cultural heritage and language form ideal cross-cutting themes. Existing organisation that target women and/or the youth should be targeted to incorporate a tourism related mandate to such themes.

Tasks		
5.2.2.1	Improving the image of tourism jobs: “Faces in Tourism”.	Individual profile of 30 MV resort employees covering the scope of skills, back grounds, education and responsibilities; Facebook, Twitter, print, YouTube video,
5.2.2.2	Linking back; school visits by current staff	Guest lecture by currently employed resort staff member who attended that specific school; themed & documented by MoT (appointee) for use in curriculum development.
5.2.2.3	School visits by the Hon. Minister	Target of 1 visit each month to enhance the profile of employment in the industry.
5.2.2.4	CBO/NGO functional & operational in tourism	NGOs and CBOs to address Heritage & Tourism linkages; climate change, cultural change and the tourism industry – expands current community organisations’ mandate to include tourism aspects around climate adaptation, cultural safeguarding, biodiversity conservation., tourism as catalyst of heritage conservation. Linked to strategic target 6.3.
5.2.2.5	School cooking week introduced	Resort chef to arrange school cooking week with specific school; creation of local dish/recipe/food item to be used/sold at resort on fair trade principles
5.2.2.6	Visitor language booklet	Enhance interest and exposure to languages/ cultures. Distributed grade 8-10 as part of tourism curriculum
5.2.2.7	Atoll tourism week introduced	“What makes my atoll different from other atolls”! MoT to host atoll tourism forum; 0.5 trade discussion/0.5 value chain resort forum. Merchandising. Roll-out based on staff origin list. Programme designed by MoT in cooperation with resorts, island council; value chain function for economic linkages and awareness programme; island visits.
5.2.2.8	Target constituted women groups to address challenges around female employment	At least one women’s group/association to hold a mandate in tourism issues.

5.2.3 INCREASE INDUSTRY COMMITMENT TOWARDS MALDIVIAN EMPLOYEES

The tourism industry stands to benefit from profiling itself as a truly Maldivian resort if certain human resources criteria are being met. Through a self-regulating effort, standards and a code of conduct should be formulated that reflect a willingness to address tangible aspects of human resource aspects in tourism. Government should also make an effort to ensure that the tourist generating markets increase the request for ‘truly Maldivian’ resort products and are able to identify those through a certification scheme.

Task		
5.2.3.1	Fair Trade Label: “Maldivian & More” introduced	Creation of a Maldivian Certification Scheme that awards HR commitments and best practice. Assessment/scoping of possible linkages to certification programme in generating markets and large international management brands
5.2.3.2	Self-regulation by (atoll) industry;	Percentage of local, trained and certified staff employed merits branding and accreditation of the resort. MTAC to initiate the dialogue at selected atolls and draft/communicate the agenda, schedule of meetings/

locations to create an “atoll brand” based on local staff.

5.2.3.3 Generating market exposure	Travel magazine write-up on the ‘real’ Maldivian resorts (web and print)
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5.3 ENHANCED CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Challenge: Industry requires a labour force with an evolving hospitality skills set that conforms to international demand associated with high-end leisure products in order to safeguard its competitive position which is not found to date, especially amongst the entrance level employees. The industry does not provide an incentive for ‘trained’ individuals as it operates a position-based remuneration system which does not recognise skills and/or experience at functional level. The work force in general does not develop a career, is demanding and un-loyal and has a limited productive time in the industry totalling less than 15 years on average.

Target: Improve the measurable skills of the Maldivian work force to ensure an industry wide skills comparison system in line with the visitor product. Emphasis placed on soft-skills like attitude, motivation and inter-personal behaviour. Lengthen the productive time in the industry by identifying and introducing incentives for upward mobility. Special emphasis on positions in which Maldivians are stuck (waiters & room boys) or under-represented (food & beverage production).

Establishment of a standard system for comparing skills sets and training efforts by 2013. Increase the ratio of people enrolled in hospitality training who actual engage in the industry to 75%. Increase the productive time in the industry by 5 years.

5.3.1 TRAINING

Many excellent training efforts are conducted in the Maldives by individual resorts and training institutions. Apart from individual resorts efforts to train their staff in a structured & planned approach there are numerous scholarships available for longer-serving staff to enhance their skills towards supervisor and management positions. Two management (Four Seasons & Taj Exotica) offer comprehensive apprenticeship programmes and two ‘training resort’ licences have been awarded for Nohivaramfaru and Gan/Budu/Gasfinohlu back in 2008.

The initiative of the President’s Office (July 2011) aims to create a pool of skilled and employable Maldivians readily available to replace foreign workers in semi-skilled positions in specific occupations and areas. The target for the tourism industry is to train 3800 school-leavers over the next 12 months through a variety of apprenticeship, internships and oversees training (details in annex 3).

All these efforts need to be structured into an ‘industry’ effort as not every individual resort is able to commit continuously and quality levels are different throughout. Formal linkages and synergies between resort-based training and institution-based training needs to happen and the feasibility of a hotel school, as a missing link in the hospitality education in the country, determined. The presence of a Hotel School will enhance skills development to the highest level as well as provide a visible, institutional reflection of the importance of human resource developments in the hospitality industry in the Maldives. It is highly unlikely that sufficient Maldivian students can be found to sustain a Hotel School and foreign students will have to be accepted. A business plan for a hotel school is required.

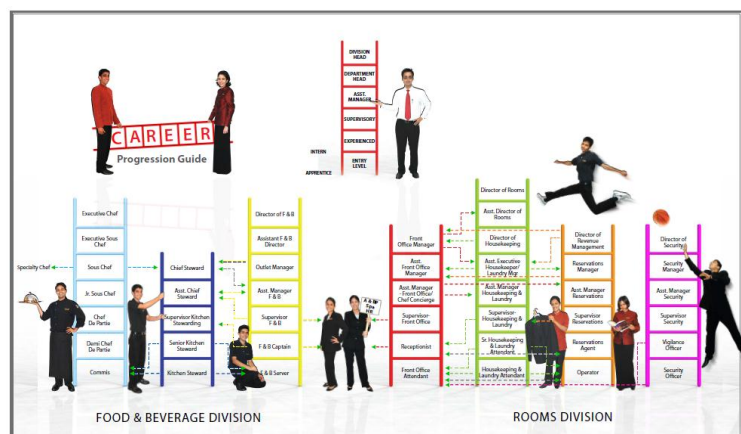
At present, the industry does not reward the self-initiated training efforts of an employee. Remuneration is based on position and not on skills and experience and no industry standard exists for staff-positions which needs to be addressed urgently.

Task	
5.3.1.1 Certify resort-based training	Ensure on-the-job training programmes are certified to national accreditation standards at 30 resorts. Establishment of operational guidelines related to training resorts and on-resort training
5.3.1.2 Training effort database created	Improve the coordination of training activities that are being conducted throughout the Maldives by different companies, institutions and non-governmental organisations.
5.3.1.3 Scholarship fund established.	Administered by the MTAC based on published guidelines. Donations by operational resorts and introduction of scholarship payment as part of new resort development. Creation of a formalised relationship with 5-7 international tourism & hospitality establishments for the advancement of staff in specialised fields of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - F&B production - HR management - Community tourism - Fair Trade in tourism - Carbon neutral tourism operations - Marketing - Research and Development
5.3.1.4 Pre-joining training incentive introduced	Industry to introduce a (self-regulated) once-off payment for people joining after formal training – linked to 6.3.1.5
5.3.1.5 Department specific training conducted	Institutionalisation of the President’s Office Training Programme Emphasis on cooking/kitchen; completion/joining bonus
5.3.1.6 Hotel School established	Determine the feasibility of a Hotel School at Faru Kolhufushi certified by an international renowned hotel training institute.

5.3.2 CAREER

The Maldivian tourism industry is characterised by time restricted contracts and relatively short employment participations in general. Maldivians need to be encouraged to participate longer and work towards an individual career path that forms a true reflection of individual’s strengths and potential.

This will require the formulation of standards as well as strengthening of career thinking and awareness which needs to be introduced before the recruitment process and in which island-based civil society can play a pivotal role facilitating long-term



community trust with resorts at atoll level. Such an intermediate level organisation will assist in the reducing the recruitment costs by individual resorts and could overcome the current repetitive process of resorts targeting island populations for entry-level enrolment. An Island-based Info Centre can function as a continuous career information and enrolment office and provide ‘contact’ and dialogue between potential employees (school-leavers) and atoll resorts. It can function as the inhabited island liaison office for the industry and organise labour related interactions, as well as social events (e.g. sports matches between island and resorts).

Task	
5.3.2.1	Self-regulation standards on career paths introduced
5.3.2.2	Introduction of long-serving incentive
5.3.2.3	Establishment of Island based info centre / NGOs

5.4 VALUE CHAIN DEVELOPMENT

Challenge: The ‘one island, one resort’ concept has created two parallel universes in the Maldives and very little integration exists between inhabited islands and resorts. Many socio-cultural challenges hinder the engagement of Maldivians, especially women, in direct employment at resorts. Little integrated market dynamics exist around tourism at atoll level. The resort product creates self-sufficient enclaves that are completely isolated from local communities creating a feeling amongst local residents that tourism brings no benefits. This means that the negative perception around tourism is not countered by any positive attributes.

Target: By creating market linkages emphasising the possibilities of income generating opportunities for atoll communities from tourism, positive and tangible linkages with (resort) tourism are created thereby lowering the threshold for entering the tourism industry integrating tourism into existing inhabited-island livelihoods.

Establishment of ten community-based tourism associations at island level; five institutionalised resort forums; three defined and awarded economic user rights for local communities around protected marine resources; and 25% of resort staff residing on inhabited islands by 2020.

5.4.1 ORGANISED ISLAND TOURISM ASSOCIATION

To overcome the difficulty in interacting with ‘the community’ and to create interest in and a mandate towards tourism related issues, island based tourism organisations should be formed. Government (MTAC) should provide a template for the constitution of such an association which should be membership based and interact with the island (atoll) council on issues and income generating opportunities around tourism. They should develop an after-school programme that complements the (renewed) tourism curriculum at secondary school level and ideally be spearheaded by a community member who has experience in the industry.

Ideally, existing cultural associations on the islands can be enhanced to incorporate a tourism mandate in their objectives. One of the special tourist attractions of any small island states is the distinctiveness of their cultures. The diversity and fragility of their environments are reflected in the diversity and fragility of their cultures. The protection of the former is an important condition for the protection of the latter and an additional opportunity to benefit from heritage site utilisation and cultural performances to be incorporated into the itinerary of a Maldivian visit.

Task	
5.4.1.1 Formalisation of local tourism association at island level to serve as guides, interpreter, caterer, home stay, cultural performances, etc.	Organisational development and training for island association. National accreditation by the MTAC. Special emphasis to be placed on the inclusion of women groups.

5.4.2 ECONOMIC USER RIGHTS

In general, tourism has contributed much to the development of the Maldives and is one of only a few development options available. This means that the future of the Maldives depends, to a large extent, on tourism for future growth, stimulating the development of other sectors. However, if not properly planned and managed, tourism could significantly degrade the resource base on which it is so dependent. The fragility and interdependence of islands, and the unspoilt character on which Maldives' eco-tourism product depends, calls for careful management across the country. If the link between resource conservation and benefit creation is not made amongst inhabited island populations, the incentive to safeguard such heritage is missing.

The government's tourism master plan identifies Responsible Tourism as the key guiding principle for tourism development. Responsible tourism implies a proactive approach by tourism industry partners to develop, market and manage the tourism industry in a responsible manner. Responsible tourism implies tourism industry responsibility to the environment as well as the promotion of equitable and sustainable tourism and it's the responsibility of government to create the enabling environment for (amongst other):

- The devolution of rights to manage and benefit from tourism to be linked to responsibility at a producer level.
- The development of the inhabited & populated areas, in a manner that provides island communities the right to enter the tourism industry equitably and from a position of strength.
- The development of meaningful economic linkages between resorts and the surrounding communities.
- Responsibility to devolve authority to a local level to allow local cultures the ability to protect themselves from over-commercialisation and over-exploitation.
- The integration of these concepts into atoll development plans

Responsible tourism means that visitors and residents alike will abide by the rules deemed necessary to ensure sustainable development of this industry, particularly with respect to the environment and culture of the Maldives.

Towards this objective, the initiatives by individual island councils and communities to develop available heritage resources into visitor products from which benefits can accrue should be encouraged and supported. It is important that such initiatives are successful to ensure interest in tourism is not lost.

Task		
5.4.2.1	Development of heritage tourism products for visitors	The rich and diverse heritage resources to be developed into actual visitor products. Pilot intervention to target one/two per atoll; funding to be sourced separately for each product.
5.4.2.2	Creation of community concessions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Head-lease for resort/ picnic islands to island tourism associations - Shareholding in resort / dive operation - Economic user rights of protected marine resources (concession) 	Policy and by-law formulation to ensure user rights over tourism activities are vested with island communities and responsibilities towards resource management defined.

5.4.3 RESORT FORUM

Through UNDP support, two Resort Forums have been held that established business linkages between inhabited island entrepreneurs and resorts. A resort forum is a (currently) informal gathering of resort operators and local island entrepreneurs to discuss business linkages and trade opportunities. These facilitated efforts, at atoll level, assist in assessing the overall impact on the economic, social and ecological aspects of tourism, help plan sustainable tourism and develop eco- and cultural tourism. It also provides a platform for harmonising standards and regulations and providing mutually supportive cooperation schemes at the atoll level.

The formalisation of resort forums strengthen atoll mechanisms for the exchange of information on the development of a safe and sustainable tourism sector, using, as appropriate, the capacities of regional support organisations.

Such mechanisms will ensure a proper integration of tourism benefits into local economic development.

Task		
5.4.3.1	Establishment of 20 resort forums	Create proper organisational structures for resort forum based on existing and identified stakeholder groups (see 6.4.1.1/ community tourism organisations), including non-governmental organizations and women, in the creation and implementation of sustainable inclusive market initiatives linked to resort economies.

5.4.4 STAFF ACCOMMODATION AT INHABITED ISLANDS

Employees in the tourism industry form a formidable economic force that is being highly segregated from atoll economies as long as they have to reside within the resort. For a true integration of tourism into atoll economies, the economic potential of the labour force is to be utilised. The long-term objective should therefore be the relocation of resort staff to nearby inhabited islands. This will have a huge potential impact for island livelihoods and counter the current negative population trends at atoll level. Renting of residential property and shop purchases will stimulate trade.

Atoll	Estimated staff numbers current	Projected maximum staff number based on planned resorts	Atoll Population
Ha (Alif)	511	1,214	8,402
Ha (Dhaalu)	0	1,725	10,079
Shaviyani	0	1,230	7,439
Noonu	623	2,210	6,233
Raa	540	1,277	8,921
Baa	1,566	2,758	6,330
Lhaviyani	1,496	2,341	6,264
Malé North	7,217	7,641	12,371 ⁴
Malé South	2,919	2,997	
Alif North	2,227	2,286	3,986
Alif South	4,220	4,333	5,887
Vaavu	392	460	1,143
Meemu	448	529	3,241
Faafu	280	288	2,233
Dhaalu	488	1,272	3,295
Thaa	0	897	5,525
Laamu	74	708	7,623
Gaaf North	322	1,571	5,018
Gaaf South	0	1,442	6,785
Gnaviyani	0	138	4,695
Total	24,253	38,513	115,470

Family life is possible and school enrolment increases as will recreational facilities. Tension could occur between indigenous island residents and 'new' residents which could include expatriate employees.

Numbers therefore need to be controlled to ensure that indigenous population is not outnumbered.

Resort operations will encounter a definitive shift in operational procedures which will require a phased approach. Resorts do stand to gain from current staff-accommodation becoming available for guest facility construction. An assessment of actual capacities and synergies with the government's efforts towards transport and housing provision should be determined.

Task	
5.4.4.1	<p>Phased transition from resort-based staff housing to inhabited-island housing as catalyst for local economic development.</p> <p>Determination of actual and projected numbers based on MTAC data collection set on localisation. Operational structure defined and linked to government scheme around transport and housing and atoll development plans. Incentive scheme and certification of resorts that meet target of outsourced staff housing. Possible tax incentives if staff housed at inhabited islands meets certain targets (60%/70% - long-term strategy)</p>

5.5 ENHANCED ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

Challenge: For an enabling environment to be conducive to the meaningful and sustainable development of human resources in the tourism industry it needs to overcome challenges on three levels: [1] the **confusing and conflicting** mandate, responsibilities and procedures around human

⁴ Excludes Malé Municipality

resources issues; [2] the **weakness in enforcement** and control of current policies and regulations and [3] weak and erratic communications between, and amongst, tourism stakeholders.

Target: Transparent, clear and appropriate mechanisms with clearly defined mandates in support of human resource development in the tourism sector amongst government, private sector and community stakeholders on national and atoll level.

Efficient, effective and appropriate regulatory environment that recognises human resources as a key aspect of the tourism industry and operates an evaluation and control mechanisms.

5.5.1 GOVERNMENT CONTROL

The government, through a variety of agencies, plays a key role in the regulation of the industry. One of the key control mechanisms is the quota system and associated work-permit. This system is a cause of concern for the industry and unlikely to be applicable if the newly planned and licenced resorts come online. The current system does not reflect skills and experience or the likelihood of actual skills transfer. The reality of these shortcomings also means that work permits do not necessarily reflect actual positions and job descriptions and the process involved in the application and registration of work-permits is cumbersome.

Enhanced government control should include the transition to atoll/island councils in line with decentralisation efforts.

		Task
5.5.1.1	A clear, user-friendly work permit system created and appropriately enforced.	Based on government development objectives and in dialogue with the industry and based on the industry standards to be formulated, a work-permit system is to be established that is beneficial for the Maldives, enforceable practical in its administration and with a fixed quote for 5 years.
5.5.1.2	Mandate & authority of Ministry of Tourism, Arts & Culture (re-) defined	The Ministry of Tourism should strengthen its mandate around human resources in tourism by creating a research and development section that is able to capture and analyse data for the benefit of enhancing HR issues. The inspection system of the Ministry should be redesigned to include technical specialised fields around power/water supply and retention, dive school, motorised transport, cooling and safety/security. Verification of HR structures should form a separate inspection effort that is based on industry standards (to be formulated) and the (new) work permit system.
5.5.1.3	Tourism mandate introduced at island/atoll council level	Island/atoll councils should be awarded a clear mandate in tourism that occurs in their constituency. This should focus on the identification of site & cultural attractions on in- and uninhabited islands, the endorsement of community-based organisations with a tourism mandate, the administration of (possible) concession rights granted to island communities and the support to the proposed liaison offices.

5.5.2 CIVIL SOCIETY

To current estranged relationship between inhabited – and resort island merits a role for civil society organisations. NGOs/CBOs that are based on inhabited islands with an objective towards community and economic development are likely to have the trust of the residents are therefore more likely to be successful in introducing and discussing tourism related issues. The multi-disciplinary aspect of tourism should be used to engage craft/cultural groups, agricultural producers, fishermen, transport providers, school groups, sports groups, etc. by creating synergy between those themes and tourism. It will help to overcome the negative perception around tourism by focussing on the existing linkages and benefits and build on these for further integration. To date, no development NGO with a tourism mandate exists (although Maldivian regulations include membership-based industry organisations as NGOs; these are incorporated under Industry Organisation).

Specific roles related to human resource development (recruitments), the formation of community tourism associations and value chain development (resort forum) should be introduced into the mandate of identified NGOs.

		Task
5.5.2.1	Incorporate a tourism mandate and initiative amongst 10, island-based NGOs	Conduct a national NGO & Tourism workshop in Malé (1 day) to determine opportunities for involvement in tourism at island level. Creation of a NGO tourism work plan around recruitment, career planning and value chain development and (where possible) the operation of an island info centre.

5.5.3 INDUSTRY ORGANISATION

The level of industry organisation is not a reflection of the size and scope of the industry. There is no formal atoll based dialogue amongst the industry and the current trade organisations do not have atoll representation and are not linked together into one, overall industry umbrella forum. Dialogue is ‘issue (problem)’ based and not development oriented and many resort managers express a level of disillusion with the trade organisation.

Although informal networks exist and are perceived as efficient, they are also affected by the general industry characteristic of high staff turnover. If key individuals leave, these networks lose their momentum as well.

The ‘one island, one resort’ industry requires a pro-active approach to industry dialogue and development as the isolated setting hinders ongoing information exchange.

The functioning of the Tourism Employees Association of the Maldives (TEAM) should be elaborated. Early interactions between TEAM and resorts have been tense and difficult and although a wide support for an employee representation exists, operational approaches need to be strengthened which requires the creation of a dialogue between parties. The underlying aspect of conflict resolution, labour disputes and dismissals could be addressed through (self-regulating) industry standards.

To ensure an effective bottom-up approach to industry organisations, resorts should come together at atoll level and discuss the practical challenges around their daily operations. This makes the issues to be discussed more tangible, allows for easier follow-up and face-to-face meetings and forms the basis of the diversification of the industry into atoll specific brands.

The benefits of such approach are multiple:

- Creates 'the Maldivian Way' based on consensus and mutual respect
- Creates improved efficiency in the adoption of relevant codes and regulations
- Creates a collective identity
- Creates consistency in tourism HR and training
- Consistency in labour market conditions

Task		
5.5.3.1	Establishment of structured, thematic industry forums	To enhance the dialogue and enable better data collection, a human resource industry forum should be established made-up of HR practitioners that share information, practices and establish, and check, industry standards and requirements.
5.5.3.2	Twice annual national tourism dialogue created	Two times a year, a national tourism dialogue should be organised by the industry for its members and invited (government) stakeholders in which open dialogue on industry issues are discussed.
5.5.3.3	Atoll (province) industry representation introduced	At all 20 atolls, an industry representative structure should be established with an agenda to discuss HR and other industry issues and provide input into the national dialogue.

It is recommended that an appropriate organisation framework be developed within the Ministry of Tourism, arts & Culture in order to ensure effective implementation of the strategic plan and also ensure that the future plans benefit not only from the monitoring and evaluation but also from the feedback provided.

5.6: PROPOSED SEQUENCE OF ACTIONS

Increase Interest in Tourism Labour	2012				2013				2014				2015				2016			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
CURRICULUM ENHANCED																				
Essay competition on tourism	→																			
Resort visit programme					→															
Module introduction (Atoll, employment market access & soft skills)					→															
Improved technical curriculum	→																			
NATIONAL AWARENESS DRIVE																				
Image Improvement: Faces in tourism	→																			
Linking back; school visits					→															
School visits by Minister					→															
Heritage & Tourism					→															
Visitor Language booklet					→															
Atoll tourism weak			→				→				→				→				→	
Women’s group mandate development	→																			
INCREASE INDUSTRY COMMITMENT																				
“Maldivian & More” certification					→															
Self-regulation guidelines					→															
Generating market exposure									→											

ENHANCED CAREER DEVELOPMENT	2012				2013				2014				2015				2016			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
TRAINING																				
Certification of Resort-based Training																				
Training efforts data base	→																			
Scholarship fund established			→																	
Pre-joining training incentive																				
Department specific training conducted	→	→																		
Hotel School	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→
CAREER																				
Self-regulating standards	→	→	→	→																
Introduction of long-serving incentive																				
Info centre																				

VALUE CHAIN DEVELOPMENT	2012				2013				2014				2015				2016			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
ORGANISED ISLAND TOURISM ASSOCIATION																				
Formalised associations	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→												
ECONOMIC USER RIGHTS																				
Heritage Tourism Products																				
Community concession development	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→
RESORT FORUM																				
Establishment of 20 resort forums	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→

STAFF ACCOMMODATION																				
Staff accommodation at inhabited islands	----->																			

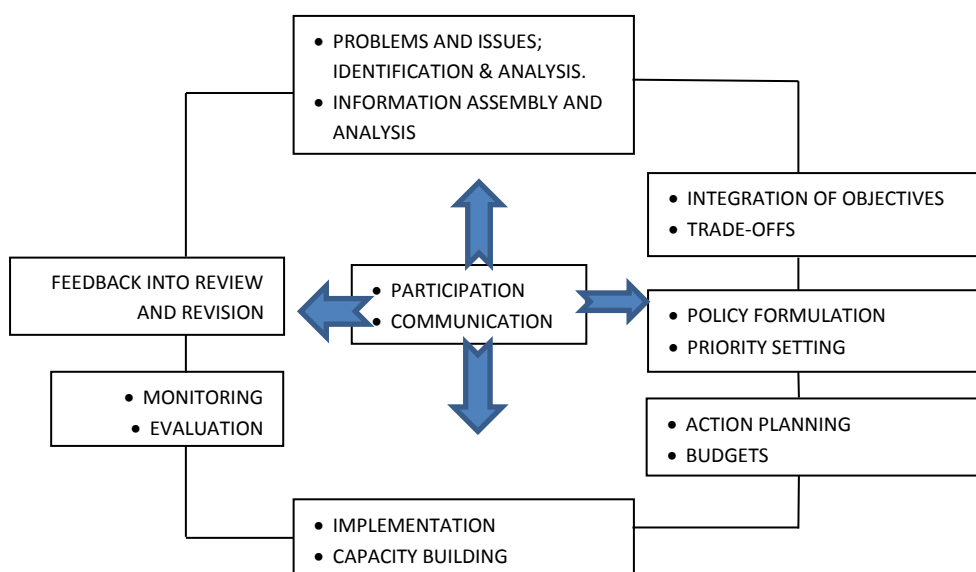
ENHANCED ENABLING ENVIRONMENT	2012				2013				2014				2015				2016			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
GOVERNMENT CONTROL																				
Work Permit/ Quota	→																			
Mandate & control	→																			
Island council tourism mandate					→															
CIVIL SOCIETY																				
NGOs with tourism mandate	→																			
INDUSTRY ORGANISATION																				
Thematic Industry Forum	→																			
National Tourism Dialogue	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Atoll level tourism industry organisation					→															

Implementation

This Human Resources Strategy for the Tourism Sector in the Maldives targets the increase in Maldivians participating in the industry, extending the skills and knowledge to extend careers and establish higher service levels, diverse the opportunity for meaningful participation in, and benefits from tourism and ensure the regulatory environment, enforcement and control meet the requirements towards this.

The biggest bottle-neck identified is the **lack of interest** to enter the industry and the **lack of motivation** to remain, and grow, with the industry. The proposed strategy is a process that requires a pro-active role of the Ministry of Tourism, Arts & Culture as the lead agent. The sequencing proposed in the intervention schedule is based on a mixture of logical steps, the need for visibility and ensuring all stakeholders are exposed/recipients of interventions.

The emphasis given to strengthening of the enabling environment also targets the need for communication, monitoring and control. Many excellent plans and guiding principles for tourism development have been produced but effective control (enforcement) is not sufficiently addressed. To avoid this with regards to the Human Resource Development Strategy, the MoT, as lead agency, should adhere to following management approach and function as the core participation and communication hub:



Dialogue and communication in strategic interventions.

Tourism is often assessed on quantifiable indicators; arrivals, spending or, in the case of the Maldives, the number of expatriate employees. But, for example, the compliance with ex-pat quota does not determine the value/state/health of the industry for the Maldives and a more constant flow and analysis of data into information for action planning & budgets is required. Once a plan is in place, this forms the most important component and the appropriate **indicators** for this should be developed in close cooperation with tourism stakeholders.

In addition, the current available data suggest that the Maldives are unlikely to meet future demand for local staff members and are likely to fall short of localisation targets based on current quota divisions. The creation of an appropriate data collection and industry communication system by the Ministry should have priority. The recently (July 2011) launched training initiative by the Present's Office is creating a momentum that needs to be capitalised on to ensure accurate information about the movements of trained school-leavers is captured and monitored.

Both these intervention create an improved communication channel between government and the industry which has been identified in the strategy as an important requirement.

The following priority steps should be taken in the implementation:

[1] Identify an individual within the Ministry of Tourism, Arts & Culture who takes on the coordinating position to ensure that the strategy is implemented. It is important to understand that this is a coordination role and not an implementation role as such is required from a wide variety of stakeholders.

[2] Identify focal-points amongst other government, civil society and industry stakeholders to ensure proper communication and coordination of efforts. Priority institutions include:

- Ministry of Human Resources, Youth & Sports
- Ministry of Economic Planning
- Ministry of Education
- Gender departments, Ministry of Health & Social Welfare
- Ministry of Islamic Affairs
- Maldives Association of Tourism Industries
- Tourism Employees Association of the Maldives
- Atoll councils (see 6.)

[3] Establish a link with (through the coordinator at the Ministry of Tourism) with planned and ongoing projects that have a link with tourism & human resources development. These linkages can be found on environmental, agricultural, economic, business, gender, education and/or governance issues. Priority projects include the Gender and Economic Empowerment Project and the Climate Adaptation Project, both supported by UNDP.

[4] The recently launched training initiative of the President's Office requires a special coordination effort as it implements efforts on national awareness creation, skills development and industry placements. These form key areas identified by the strategy and the Ministry should ensure that it monitors and documents efforts and targets strategy interventions in such a way that they diversify and complement the training initiative.

[5] A strategic coordination structure with the Maldives Marketing & PR Corporation (MMPC) should be established by the Ministry's coordinator to ensure that possible synergies in public communication are identified and the 'tourism message' communicated at each possible opportunity. MMPC is also able to provide valuable insight into the challenges of targeting

populations segments such as youth, island populations and females and those insights are essential in the successful delivery of a tourism awareness drive and the best possible way to 'kick-start' the implementation identified.

[6] The Ministry should formulate a priority list of target atolls in the implementation of the strategy that conforms to the size and status of tourism development. Those atolls with the highest number of developing (and planned) resorts should have priority and where possible, Atoll Tourism Liaison Officer identified.

[7] The capturing of regular human resources data should be given priority and the expansion of the Ministry of Tourism's statistics department's mandate should be given consideration. Although it is understood that the Ministry of Human Resources is mandated with this task, the situational analysis justifies the development of such an industry specific data system by the Tourism Ministry. Any data will be made available to line ministries.

[8] The dialogue with the industry, initiated through the human resources strategy process, should be maintained and issues of common concern given priority. It is proposed to work towards the formulation of industry standards through a consultative process with the tourism industry. These standards should ensure that remuneration for staff is comparable across the industry, based on job description and inclusive of training and intangible benefits. This will form a huge step towards establishing recognisable industry operations opposed to individual brand and company standards.

The Maldives is committed to delivering professional tourism services which are of the highest possible quality. It should conceptualise an interpretation of 'quality' as being for the purposes of achieving a single objective – "Maximising the impact and effectiveness of the nation's engagement with tourism products and processes" – supported through deliverable and measurable quality indicators of Performance, Innovation, Learning, Recruitment and Reputation.

This commitment is reflected by the provision of quality services to its visitors. The industry should invest in its staff and operating systems to ensure it succeeds. This investment should be recognised with accreditation and continued audits (annually) by external evaluators to ensure the Maldives remains ahead of the quality agenda.

The Maldives should recognise that its people are its biggest asset, and invest in training, professional development and peer review. The Ministry, mandated to safeguard the wellbeing of tourism in the country, should hold regular internal retreats and in-days where staff and associate stakeholders have the opportunity to come together, share lessons from their work and learn from each another.

The tourism industry culture should be value-based and depend less on rules and manuals and more on industry staff's awareness of issues and options, and their own sense of a responsibility to deliver. However, the guidance of standards will be required to develop and implement quality administration systems, standards and guidelines that support the daily work and the delivery of a first class visitor experience.

To help the Maldives achieve its quality objectives, the implementation of the strategy will have to include:

- continuously reviewing the quality of all industry-wide systems and processes
- promoting knowledge management across the industry as a whole
- monitoring the Continuing Professional Development of all staff
- supporting the industry to uphold standards of professional practice.

1. People consulted
2. Documents consulted
3. President's office training initiative
4. Ministry implementation plan