

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Research on Climate Change and its Impact on Women and Youth in the Maldives

UNFPA
(MDV-ToR/2023/029)

Hiring Office:	UNFPA Maldives Country Office
Purpose of consultancy:	<p>Maldives is a low lying small island development state, consisting of 1190 islands. More than 180 islands are inhabited and an additional 400 islands are resort islands and industrial islands. Due to pollution and salinization of the water table, the majority of the urban population consume bottled water for drinking. Much of the food, beauty and household items are imported. At the same time, due to urbanization, many of the households live in small apartments and have adopted convenient lifestyles with one time use plastics and other materials for everyday living.</p> <p>Global research has already established linkage between human exposure to chemicals and plastic particles through food, inhalation and skin contact. These researches reaffirm chemicals in plastic can disrupt the endocrine system leading to various morbidities including cancers, and impair reproductive health including fertility outcomes and child development starting from the embryo stage.</p> <p>Like in many countries, solid waste disposal is the most difficult development challenge facing Maldives today. With the tourism sector producing the lion's share of the plastic waste, people living in the urban and island communities bear the uneven costs of plastic pollution and waste production.</p> <p>While national documents recognise increases in patterns of endocrine disorders and metabolic syndromes, there is no research undertaken in Maldives to make the connection on reproductive health outcomes. Nonetheless, more and more young people seek medical care for non-communicable diseases including cancer, polycystic ovarian syndrome and couples seeking in vitro fertilisation for fertility treatment. To prevent further harm caused by plastic pollution, this proposed study aims to investigate the association between lifestyle related plastic exposure and human health outcomes including the reproductive health outcome and identify safer and more sustainable alternatives to plastic materials.</p> <p>Human-induced climate change has become unequivocal, increasingly apparent and widespread and is causing dangerous and widespread public health crisis, biodiversity crisis, environmental crisis and social justice crisis all packaged into one, especially in small island development states. The climate crisis is a major threat to the vision of human-centred sustainable development, as outlined in the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) as well as the 2030 Agenda. The plastic lifecycle consequences disrupt soils, waters and it even ends up in our digestive, respiratory and even vascular systems.</p> <p>Hence, UNFPA is seeking the services of an international consultant to undertake the captioned research. The purpose of this research is to generate quantitative and qualitative data needed to unequivocally demonstrate the varied impacts of climate change on the lives of women, adolescent girls, and youth, firmly beyond</p>

	<p>assumptions to generate evidence base to understand and address the direct association between climate change, gender-based violence, harmful practices, and sexual and reproductive health outcomes. It also aims to identify the impacts of climate change on social norms including types of social norms that reinforce negative coping mechanisms and compound gender inequality and those that inform positive climate adaptation for women and girls in the Maldives.</p>
<p>Scope of work: <i>(Description of services, activities, or outputs)</i></p>	<p>The Consultant is expected to support UNFPA to undertake a qualitative and/or mixed method research on the impacts of climate change on sexual and reproductive health outcomes in Maldives. The primary goal is to understand the climate change related factors contributing to sexual and reproductive health outcomes. It will also consider impacts of plastic exposure through lifestyle factors, ranging from bottled water, urbanised living using convenience food, take away coffee culture and waste disposal methods contribute to the metabolic disorders leading to reproductive health outcomes including pregnancy and maternal health, and the broader impact on gender based violence, health systems etc.</p> <p>Specific deliverables include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Literature review and analysis - A thorough review of literature and analysis of administrative records around Aasandha (Universal Health Insurance Scheme) data of non-communicable diseases, contraceptive programme, as well as any literature around behavioural practices to inform the qualitative segment of the research. ● Qualitative research - Coverage of greater Male' and two islands (one relatively urban and the other a small island) will be selected for the field work for the qualitative research. A sample of men and women from the reproductive age and youth will be selected for the in depth interviews and/or focus group discussions. ● Validation of research and submission of final document.
<p>Duration and working schedule:</p>	<p>Total of 6 months starting from September 2023 to February 2024.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● One month to develop the detailed methodology ● One month for literature review ● One month for field work ● One to two months for analysis and report writing ● One month validation and finalisation of report <p>This includes two missions to Maldives for research data collection phase and validation meeting.</p>
<p>Place where services are to be delivered:</p>	<p>The assignment will be undertaken home-based with travel to Maldives during the research phase and validation meeting.</p>
<p>Monitoring and progress control, including reporting requirements, periodicity format and deadline:</p>	<p>Work will be monitored by UNFPA and timely updates are required to be sent through email and/or virtual calls.</p>

Supervisory arrangements:	The contract will be managed by the UNFPA Country Office and the consultant will work closely with the designated focal point from UNFPA.
Expected travel:	Two missions are expected to Male', Maldives for the aforementioned work of the consultancy.
Required expertise, qualifications, and competencies, including language requirements:	<p>Primary expertise required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Master's degree (PhD desirable) in climate change/environmental research, gender studies, social sciences, development studies or related fields. • At least 5 years of research experience in areas related to climate change, sexual and reproductive health or their intersection. References to recently completed and published surveys are required. • Previous experience and demonstrated expertise in climate change science, its impacts and its interactions with health and social systems will be an added advantage. • Experience with statistical tools, modelling techniques and software used in analysing complex datasets will be an added advantage. In addition, expertise in qualitative research will be considered advantageous • Knowledge of policy frameworks and regulations related to climate change, sexual and reproductive health and sustainable development including the ability to translate research findings into actionable policy recommendations. • Excellent communication and analytical skills in English language and demonstrated ability to transfer and impart knowledge. <p>• Functional Competencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good analytical, writing, and presentation skills. Fluency in reading, writing, and speaking in English Language • Computer skills, Excel and various office applications. Demonstrated experience in knowledge and information management. <p>• Behavioural Competencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrated ability to work in a multicultural environment and to establish harmonious and effective working relationships, both within and outside the organisation. • Proven leadership, teamwork, and interpersonal skills. Ability to work and deliver under a limited period of time would be an asset.
Inputs / services to be provided by UNFPA or implementing partner (e.g support services, office space, equipment), if applicable:	<p>UNFPA Maldives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a focal point to work with the consultant and for regular communications • Monitor and facilitate the progress of the assignment. • Review and provide comments to the deliverables in a timely manner • Facilitates contacts with partners and relevant stakeholders • Facilitate access to necessary content/documents
Other relevant information or special conditions, if any:	<p>The other conditions that may apply in the undertaking of the assignment include:</p> <p>Basis of payment:</p> <p>The payment will be made in 3 installments:</p>

1. Submission of inception report including detailed research methodology (20% of payment)
2. Submission of draft research document for comments and review (40% of payment)
3. Completion of the validation meeting and submission of final documents (40% of total payment)

Format of outputs:

All documents should be submitted in editable electronic format

Language of reports/publications and other documentation and working language in country of assignment:

English

Ownership of output:

UNFPA