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Complex Crises Fund - Maldives Mid-Cycle Portfolio Review



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ACCRONYMS

ACC	Anti-Corruption Commission
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CCF	Complex Crises Fund
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DCHA	Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia, formerly AusAID)
DOS CSO	Department of State Bureau for Conflict and Stabilization Operations
EC	Elections Commission
GOM	Government of Maldives
HRC	Human Rights Commission
IFES	International Foundation for Electoral Systems
IGP	Integrated Governance Programme
JP	Jumhoree Party
MDA	Maldives Development Alliance
MDP	Maldivian Democratic Party
MESA	Maldives Election Support Activity (MESA)
MP	Member of Parliament
MPR	Mid-Cycle Portfolio Review
MSI	Management Services International
NECB	National Election Complaints Bureau
PAS	Public Affairs Section
PPM	Progressive Party of the Maldives
SEDM	Support to Elections and National Dialog in Maldives
SC	Supreme Court
TM	Transparency Maldives
ToC	Theory of Change
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WDC	Women's Development Committee

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Led by President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom for more than 30 years, Maldives shed its authoritarian tradition and conducted its first multi-party, democratic elections and peaceful transition in 2008 by selecting opposition leader Mohammad Nasheed as its President. Following the unexpected transfer of power from President Nasheed to Vice President Waheed under duress and the subsequent political turmoil in February 2012, the US Embassy and USAID Mission to Sri Lanka and Maldives developed interventions to mitigate violence, protect human rights, and support legitimacy of a democratic, inclusive electoral process. To fund these programs and achieve this objective, the USAID Mission sought and received \$3 million in support from the Complex Crises Fund (CCF) to prevent a protracted political conflict and democratic backsliding after the fragility of the democratic transition in Maldives was revealed.

As part of continued efforts to improve institutional learning, DCHA/PPM conducted a Mid-Cycle Portfolio Review (MPR) of CCF-funded interventions in Maldives during April & May 2014. To foster creativity and encourage flexibility in potentially re-directing activities, the MPR considered emerging issues, constraints, program assumptions, and other relevant critical events since inception. The review team conducted interviews of key internal and external partners in Washington, DC and the field while reviewing a myriad of important documents related to strategic, programmatic, and compliance issues with particular emphasis on gender considerations.

The team discovered well-planned, targeted and executed programs by both partners International Federation of Electoral Systems (IFES) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Although there were certainly areas each could have sharpened approaches with assistance from USAID, the strategic intent of programming was consistent from mission to beneficiary and activities timely and adaptive to an ever evolving and dynamic political environment. Although based on anecdotal evidence and perceived logical contributory analysis, the overall use of CCF met the intent of the contingency fund and again demonstrated a critical employment of resources to influence outcomes during a limited window of opportunity.

Challenges for programming remain however. Attribution of influence over program outcomes and impacts remain difficult given the nominal level of evaluation planning, coordination, and funding by USAID and partners. Furthermore, there were additional opportunities to sharpen gender programming which are outlined in the recommendations section of this review. Finally, there were opportunities to strengthen the coordination of interagency and USAID interventions in the capital and atolls to leverage relationships, especially between the electoral complaints process and adjudication of election violations.

PURPOSE & METHODOLOGY

The principle process methodology is a “snap-shot” peer review process that fosters a direct and constructive dialogue on the status of recent achievements, future challenges, and longer-term direction of CCF-funded activities. These reviews are intended to provide the Mission with a third-party analysis by a team experienced in complex crisis environments to analyze and evaluate the CCF-funded project at the program and strategic levels mid-way through the lifecycle of the project. This process provides the country team with a timely perspective, feedback, and strategic recommendations for consideration to make any possible course adjustments to the project prior to the project’s end. The review also gives the CCF Secretariat the information necessary for making informed decisions regarding future resources, and allows the CCF Secretariat to be an effective advocate for the program to a variety of audiences including the United States Congress.

While in Washington, the team reviewed documents shared and interviewed relevant stakeholders, including implementing partner staff, in-country staff, USG counterparts, and others involved with or aware of the CCF funded program. In the field, the team interviewed relevant government officials, other donor staff, implementing partners, grantees and beneficiaries and reviewed field-based activities with key stakeholders with specific emphasis on normative evaluation questions outlined in the statement of work (Annex 1). This iterative process resulted in briefings in Washington and this final document presenting findings, conclusions, and recommendations.¹

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Historically, Maldives has had an autocratic feudal structure led by a Sultan selected from the highest echelons of politicized aristocratic families. Beneath the political elite was a tier of Islamic scholars, followed by the merchants and the general population. Individuals outside these aristocratic families were not permitted to engage in political activity directly but could be enlisted as loyal “foot-soldiers” through well-established patron-client relationships. The political elites typically inter-married and would engage in often violent competition and subterfuge to control the succession to the Sultan-ship. The Sultan maintained a militia to enforce his will.

“Now that we have completed our three elections, the country is now stable and moving forward.”

-Commissioner, Maldives Elections Commission

¹ IAW USAID Evaluation Policy – January 2011 and ADS 203

Responding to international and domestic pressures, Maldives revised its Constitution and conducted its first openly-contested Presidential poll in 2008 ending the 30-year rule of President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom and electing opposition leader Mohammad Nasheed and his Maldivian Democracy Party (MDP). Assuming office with high public expectations for democratic reform and high expectations, President Nasheed faced a difficult challenge balancing public demands with the needs of the ruling elites. Since the initiation of democratic reforms and to the present day, the institutions, laws and systems of the Maldivian political and economic system have been operating with



Nasheed (L) replaced by Waheed (R) in a transfer of power in 2012 under suspected duress.

varying degrees of success. The fragile nature of the democratic transition in the Maldives was made clear by the unanticipated February 7, 2012 transfer of power from President Nasheed to Vice President Waheed. Depending on political constituency, the transfer of power was considered fully constitutional by some, namely the Supreme Court and People's Majilis, or illegitimate and obtained under duress by the former President Nasheed and followers. The political crisis that ensued has unleashed hostile reactions in the country, polarized the country into two antagonistic sides, given rise to weekly and sometimes daily protests, increased tensions and insecurity, hardened political stances, and generated instability in the political sphere. With presidential, local council, and parliamentary elections scheduled for fall 2014-winter 2015, conditions could only deteriorate further.

The fall 2013 presidential elections were supposed to work as a reset button for the Maldives. Observers saw in them an opportunity for the country to put behind it two years of political turmoil and to end the gridlock between its two main political factions: backers of Mohamed Nasheed and supporters of Maumoon Abdul Gayoom. Nasheed's strong showing in the first round of balloting held on September 7 created a sense of alarm within the old guard: it seemed that if the elections were to proceed as scheduled, they most likely would result in a victory by the former president, who had the political momentum behind him. Since that outcome was unacceptable to many elements in the old guard, they endeavored to prevent it. Mr. Gasim Ibrahim, who had come in third, closely behind Abdullah Yameen, alleged irregularities and filed a claim with the Supreme Court (SC). Even though by law the SC has no jurisdiction over electoral matters, it accepted the case on September 16 and then ruled on it on October 7, annulling the results of the September 7 polling. It did so despite the absence of any evidence of wrongdoing, and despite statements by the US, UK, Commonwealth, EU, and India, which all urged that the will of the people be respected and the second round

be held as scheduled. In addition, the SC ruling included guidelines for the Elections Commission (EC) to follow in organizing the new elections, exhibiting a blatant disregard for the EC's constitutional mandate to conduct elections independently and Parliament's mandate to determine the legislative framework for how elections should be conducted.

After the SC derailed a new attempt at holding a first round of polling (this time on October 19), elections were set for November 9. When the run-off finally was held on November 16, Yameen narrowly defeated Mohamed Nasheed, who had been favored to win. Nasheed conceded defeat immediately, and did so in a particularly magnanimous way avoiding any inflammatory language or antagonism of the victorious PPM.

Local Council and Parliamentary elections were conducted 18 January and 22 March 2014, respectively, ending the transition period following the presidential poll. All three elections were won by the coalition led by the Progressive Party of the Maldives (PPM) and supported by the Jumhoree Party (JP) and Maldives Development Alliance (MDA). In addition to winning the controversial presidential polls, the coalition won a majority of local council seats and now commands a super-majority in the parliament with 2/3 of the Members of Parliament (MPs). PPM is now the single largest party in parliament, with a simple majority of seats.

OVERVIEW OF CCF PROGRAM

To address the challenges following the events of February 2012, USAID Sri Lanka and Maldives initiated a \$3,000,000 CCF-supported intervention to ensure a unified effort to prevent a protracted political conflict and democratic backsliding after the fragility of the democratic transition in Maldives was revealed. The program objectives are to: (1) Support high-level political party talks in order to stabilize the current political environment and consolidate democracy; (2) Mitigate the risk of violent political competition by support for non-partisan discussion forums of civic and business leaders, as well as representatives from political parties and Government of Maldives (GOM) agencies; (3) Support civil society to advance reconciliation and the democratic transition; and (4) Support independent commissions to strengthen the institutional culture of transparency, accountability, and oversight.

Two mechanisms were sourced and funded to achieve program objectives – The Maldives Elections Support Activity (MESA) and Support to Elections and National Dialog in Maldives (SEDM) managed by the International Federation of Electoral Systems (IFES) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), respectively. Each of the programs are described as follows in each of their cooperative agreements:

MESA (US\$ 2,500,000 – 3 May 2013 to 30 November 2014): MESA presents an integrated, flexible approach that will support civil society organizations (CSO's) and Maldivian government institutions to reduce the prevalence of political related violence and increase civic participation to promote democratic transition. Drawing on its extensive experience working with elections management bodies to promote free and transparent elections, IFES will work with independent commissions to promote the integrity of the electoral process in the Maldives in advance of the September 2013 presidential elections and the local council and parliamentary elections which are to follow closely.

SEDM (US\$200,000 – 26 August 2013 to 25 February 2015): SEDM will provide immediate expert assistance to the Elections Commission of Maldives (EC) through a Senior Governance Advisor, and sustained catalyst support to national dialogue activities will contribute to a favorable environment for free, fair, inclusive and credible elections, help manage tensions and prevent electoral violence, and facilitate the collaboration of Maldivian citizens and their leaders in the post-elections period to advance reconciliation and the country's economic, social, and political development.

It should be noted that SEDM supports aspects of two of the three objectives of UNDP's Integrated Governance Programme (IGP) – a longer term, multi-donor, basket-funded initiative set to continue at least 15 months beyond CCF involvement. IGP also enjoys modest support for capacity building of civil society from the US Embassy Public Affairs Section (PAS) which will be described later in this document.

REVIEW FINDINGS

Strategic Analysis

1. Describe how political and contextual changes since the launch of the CCF-funded programs resulted in any changes in overall strategy, approach (Theory of Change) or activities.

An evolving political environment combined with readjustments of program activities based on greater understanding of operational environment realities caused substantive shifts in approaches without significantly revising the Theory of Change (ToC) for both prime partners – IFES and UNDP. The change was most pronounced under the IFES/MESA initiative due to its short-term nature compared to the long-term UNDP SEDM program, though there were some minor methodological and targeting revisions.

Theory of Change

The Mission ToC, as articulated both in person and via the CCF application, remained consistent and was broadly understood by implementing partners, sub-grantees, and beneficiaries.

- Mission ToC: The deepening political crisis faced by Maldives has produced significant instability in the political sphere, distrust of the democratic process, and rising influence of Islamic fundamentalism and extremism. In the absence of meaningful reconciliation among political parties, a disruption of the upcoming national, local, and parliamentary elections is inevitable, resulting in significant democratic backsliding and violent political confrontations across the country. Bolstering the political reconciliation process; institutionalizing inclusive, transparent democratic practices; and bolstering the credibility and capacity of independent political commissions, will reduce politically driven tension and conflict, limit the operating space for Islamic radicalization, and strengthen Maldives' fledgling democratic transition that began in 2008.²
- MESA/IFES ToC: If understanding of democratic principles and strengthening of key institutions is addressed, then greater consolidation and its legitimacy will be achieved.
- SEDM/UNDP: Provision of access to local government institutions, rule of law, and dialog among feuding stakeholder groups will stabilize the political environment and legitimize durable, democratic processes.
- Transparency Maldives (Sub-grantee of both MESA/IFES and SEDM/UNDP): If space is created for local communities and leaders to identify and address priorities in a more inclusive manner, more acceptable policies will be developed and public trust in institutions increased. This trust will lead to greater stability.

"Ours is a new democracy. There is little understanding of a social contract between the government and the people."

-SEDM/MESA Sub-Grantee

Assumptions

Several initial assumptions by both MESA and SEDM did not manifest themselves as planned in initial program design. Specifically, it was broadly assumed that the multi-phased electoral process would be conducted in a timely fashion and in accordance with the constitution, election-related violence would be likely during the electoral process and capacity of local CSOs and GOM entities would be sufficient to facilitate citizen access to local governance and political processes.

To overcome these challenges, both MESA and SEDM revised program activities by shifting away from a heavy reliance on civil society and local government actors to targeting individuals – specifically women and youth – to achieve their respective

² "Complex Crises Fund Proposal: Maldives 2012." 15 September 2012. Page 3.

Theories of Change. The delivery mechanisms included use of Male-based CSOs and extensions of direct operations to the atolls. This will be discussed to a greater extent under the program area of analysis and research question number

2. How do CCF-funded programs provide synergy with initiatives undertaken by other donors and the Government of Maldives?

The donor community in Maldives is limited. According to the interviews and research conducted, significant donors include Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT, formerly Australian Agency for International Development), European Union, European Commission, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), German Office for International Cooperation (GIZ), Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), and the Government of India. This assistance comes in the form of direct grants to local NGOs, though most is being delivered through funding of UN organizations including UNDP and its IGP.

Although we were not introduced to any formal donor coordination mechanisms in Maldives, the small scale of international engagements and central location of most implementing organizational headquarters in Male lends itself to consistent and broad communication. We did note that despite the proximity, there were programs which could have more closely coordinated activities and work-plans for greater effect.

Within the CCF portfolio, there may be opportunities for MESA and SEDM to more closely assign program activities and share work plans. Both activities support Transparency Maldives for similar dialog and outreach activities. Beyond CCF, the US Embassy Public Affairs Section (PAS) has provided 200K to a UNDP initiative to support Maldivian Civil Society via capacity building activities augmented by a small-grants mechanism (funded by DFAT) for sixteen targeted, atoll-based CSOs. According to UNDP, these are the same organizations supported under the SEDM dialog program prompting questions of how well they are coordinated with MESA and other non-CCF USAID initiatives. Interestingly, we discovered that this PAS program had little visibility among the USAID team in Colombo – most likely due to their new tenure and limited visibility on Maldives. Also, there seems to be little coordination between the DOJ Technical Advisor at the Prosecutor General’s office and CCF-funded initiatives. This is particularly absent with relation to the Prosecutor General’s central role in adjudicating elections-related prosecutions and investigations.

Although both UNDP and IFES asserted productive relationships with the GOM, there were, by design, limited direct support programs to governmental agencies. IFES and UNDP do, however provide technical assistance to independent commissions, in

particular the Elections Commission of Maldives (EC), Human Rights Commission (HRC), and Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC). Based on conversations with implementing partners and commissioners, the Elections Commission strengthened both its capacity and credibility with strong support from IFES and UNDP.

3. To what extent have CCF-funded programs supported the overall development objectives identified in the Country Development and Cooperation Strategy and Results Framework?

As a non-presence country, an Integrated Country Strategy (ICS) or subsequent Country Development and Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) are not required for Maldives. As we understood during the MPR process, the IFES and UNDP programs resulted from a review conducted by DOS CSO and commitment by DOS Assistant Secretary to the GOM and UN respectively. Other than the USAID Mission Resource Request (MRR), we were not presented additional analytical basis for programming in Maldives.

Program Analysis

4. To what extent have CCF programs supported initial assumptions and Theory of Change as identified in the original funding request?

As previously outlined in research Question 1, the fundamental ToC for MESA or SEDM programs did not change, only the assumptions initial activities were planned upon. Specifically, it was assumed that the broader electoral process would be conducted in a timely fashion in accordance with the constitution, election-related violence would be likely during the electoral process and capacity of local CSOs and GOM entities would be sufficient to facilitate citizen access to local governance and political processes. Only approaches were revised in order to achieve programmatic objectives with the IFES MESA Program experiencing the broadest shift.

MESA/IFES: Under the proposed and recently approved modification of its cooperative agreement, IFES has shifted activities away from engagement models as originally envisaged. One shift has been away from a model building and employing atoll-based CSOs to deliver program objectives (not truly in existence as assumed) to Male-based organizations with capability to reach individuals, specifically women and youth, in the capital and atolls. Two Male-based organizations are of particularly importance to IFES – Transparency Maldives (TM) and the Maldives Democracy Network (MDN) – with capacity building objectives continuing. New activities such as Democracy Camps, modeled on IFES COP’s experience from post-USSR Central Asia, support to Human Rights Clubs, electoral reform advocacy groups, and additional civic education and voter awareness activities, have been added to IFES programming replacing atoll-based CBO capacity building and facilitated outreach. IFES has also shifted away from supporting

the activities of the Panel for National Harmony as part of its broader interventions to legitimize Maldives electoral and reconciliation processes.

SEDM/UNDP: Due to a constricting political environment, UNDP has shifted its IGP away from institutional capacity building to focus on individuals, local programming for youth and women, and community based organizations to meet its objectives under its ToC. By providing access to government, improving its provision of services (institutions), and legitimate rule of law, durable democracy will be achieved. Community dialog programs in the atolls continue in an attempt to connect local government to its citizens to solve common issues. For the electoral process, UNDP adopted an electoral assistance approach, which focused on strategic planning and preparation for the elections cycle (including anticipating potential challenges) as opposed to the mechanics of conducting the election, which the EC was capable of administering. This was no change from what was originally planned in the initial CCF application and consistent with its longer-term IGP intervention.

5. From conception to initiation, describe program implementation including any institutional successes and challenges.

Despite what we considered to be expertly managed programs given the dynamic operational conditions, there were some challenges and successes we noted:

Challenge: The evolving political situation including interventions by the Supreme Court and High Court have turned a constitutionally predictable elections cycle into anything but. Despite three elections scheduled, five were conducted fully with two additional being cancelled as the result of interference from the Supreme Court. Both the SEDM and MESA programs were highly impacted, as central activities were elections related and many key beneficiary groups – independent commissions and CSOs – were reluctant to participate and operating under a “wait and see” mentality. This caused significant implementation delays and modifications of program activities as outlined previously in this document were required. As a result, the Cooperative Agreement for IFES has been extended to November 2014.

Challenge: Electoral violence and division, assumed and anticipated, did not materialize as a result of legitimate elections conducted by a very competent EC. Following announcement of the results for the final round of Presidential elections in late 2013, MDP leader Nasheed humbly conceded defeat to the PPM’s Yameen preempting any calls for violence. With PPM consolidating its hold on power by winning subsequent parliamentary elections (in

“The lack of sustained investment in civil society has made it weak and not able to play the critical role of facilitating dialog between the people and government.”
- UNDP

coalition with JP and other small parties) and an SC in its corner, there is very little room for the opposition MDP.

Challenge: Lack of capacity among civil society actors at the atoll, and even Male-level, to deliver program objectives. In its initial application, IFES had intended to build the capacity of atoll-based organizations to deliver program objectives related to peace building and elections. This did not materialize, as organizations simply did not exist or have the capability as anticipated. Most atoll-based CSOs are actually sports-based and not engaged with local government in the traditional democratic sense. It should be also noted that one of the prime partner organizations identified in the initial application, Raggae Foundation, is currently under investigation for potential misappropriation of IFES grant funds and has subsequently been replaced. The challenges abound with such an under developed civil society.

Challenge: Identified by the Elections Commission as key challenge was the lack of prosecutorial ability, both in terms of law and competency, to facilitate enforcement and adjudicate violations. The reliance on the prosecutor general negates much of the independence of this organization. The law needs to change and IFES is currently working in this direction, though time for the program will likely run out to see this to fruition. This is a major point for program sustainability and integrity of the elections commission in future events.

Challenge: UNDP finds it difficult to elicit the participation of local judges in its community dialog program. In fact, when our team visited Laamu Atoll and were scheduled to observe a UNDP assessment of judges perceptions of community needs, no judges appeared. We understood this may have been due to the timing of our meeting, but also due to a lack of direction from the central government. As we understand, UNDP lacks a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with any of the specific GOM ministries or Supreme Court committing to participation.



"Ultimately, the test of an election is if it's accepted by the people."

-Judge Johann Kriegler

Strength: UNDP recruitment of Senior South African Constitutional Judge Johann Kriegler under funding from CCF provided an experienced and respected technical advisor to the EC. Despite being characterized by the USAID mission as somewhat of a "free agent" and not specifically accountable to the donor, the Judge is widely recognized and credited for his contribution in promoting an independent and

competent electoral commission. His outspoken support of the EC provided critical political cover and gravitas where the Panel for National Harmony could not and, according to anecdotal evidence, was a key element in electoral legitimacy and success.

Challenge: UNDP's support to the Panel for National Harmony. The panel lacks a strategic vision following completion of its mandate as a neutral, mediating body during the recent series of parliamentary, presidential, and local council elections. Without a clear mandate, the all-volunteer body has initiated dialog with primarily youth groups and not engaging political parties, parliament, private sector, or religious community. UNDP characterizes the panel as an important high-level component of a multi-level social cohesion/community dialogue strategy, but there is no evidence that they can fulfill this role. [based on activity list to date, as well as attitude political party engagement, private sector, and religious sector engagement]. The Panel has also not conducted any activities outside of Male. They have only UNDP resources, no legal status or mandate by any branch of government (believe that the fact that the President met with them gives them de facto legitimacy). Other than one UNDP staff and reimbursement for minor administrative cost, have no budget and are unaware of how much resources are available to them. Justice and elections commissions would not meet with Panel as it has no legal standing. What is more, mission representatives shared challenges encountered with the standing up the Panel for Social Harmony, perception of the panel as foreign intervention as opposed to homegrown initiative, as a panel not quite senior enough to broker/facilitate dialogue between senior political leadership but also too aloof to connect with citizenry at grassroots level.

Gender Analysis

6. To what extent have program design and activities provided for gender equality?

Both CCF partners—UNDP and IFES—demonstrate a clear commitment to gender integration, but the PPR team observed that translating these goals into practice remains a challenge and will require vigilance in the Maldivian context.

Strengths: It was notable that both UNDP and IFES have engaged staff for CCF-funded activities with specific gender training and expertise. All the UNDP community facilitators we met were certified as “gender trainers” for UNDP and several of the male UNDP community facilitators have formed their own male advocacy group to support women’s human rights and combat gender-based violence in the Maldives. IFES has also employed a program officer with significant gender experience and was in the process of augmenting the project staff with a part-time gender advisor, which may be converted to a full-time position. Given the realignment of IFES activities to focus specifically on women’s political participation—including a research study on key barriers—the extra gender specialist will be valuable. IFES’ local partners (TM and

Democracy House) are implementing strategies to address gender balance in their activities; for example, upcoming democracy camps will include module(s) on gender equality and specific recruitment/selection methods are being used to promote gender balance.

Challenge: Both CCF partners noted initially low/lower than expected participation of women in project activities such as trainings and community consultations. UNDP and IFES have analyzed barriers to women's participation and adopted strategies to increase participation through direct outreach to women, working through Women's Development Committees, and modifying meeting schedules. However, in a full day of observing community consultations led by UNDP facilitators in Laamu Atoll, the team observed the participation of only one woman—a primary school teacher who clearly felt uncomfortable sharing views in front of the male school principals who comprised the rest of the panel. A read-out offered of a prior meeting with the local WDC underscores the importance of engaging women in such consultations, as they highlighted community priorities that were essential for development planning but not raised by other groups. Women, for example, noted the lack of access to affordable public transport on the atoll, as a barrier to healthcare and better educational opportunities for children and families.

Additionally, there is a tendency to over-rely on WDCs as the 'voice' of women. WDCs are a certainly a good resource, but engaging women who are not formally involved in local governance may yield broader perspectives. Additionally, pending changes to the decentralization law may dissolve WDCs in favor of alternative measures for advancing women's participation in local governance (e.g. designated seats on the council) and WDCs may no longer be a clear entry point for CCF or related activities in the Maldives.

Strength: As part of a shift in programmatic focus, the analysis of both IFES and UNDP has led them to focus on broader constituencies such as youth and women who are under-represented in political processes and institutions, but which simultaneously have the potential to contribute to the constructive management of conflict and consolidation of democracy in the Maldives.

Maldives has made some important gains with respect to gender equality and women's empowerment, including: high literacy rates for males and females; strong enrollment and retention in primary and secondary school for both groups; ratification of CEDAW; and the adoption of the Domestic Violence Act to strengthen support and access to justice for survivors of domestic violence. At the same time, women are severely under-represented in decision-making roles, representing only 6 percent of parliamentarians and only 2 percent of local council members. A range of barriers such as the lack of supportive working conditions, increasing religious conservatism, the under-

funding/non-funding of WDCs, and the closure of public spaces such as women’s mosques limit women’s participation and influence in the public sphere.

Work of the nascent and very small segment of civil society dedicated to gender equality issues has focused primarily on educational efforts around the Domestic Violence Act. These dedicated advocates, including young men interested in fighting for women’s rights, acknowledge the need to expand advocacy to address underlying issues that increase vulnerability to violence (e.g. lack of economic empowerment) and limit women’s full participation in public life, but have struggled to make this leap.

IFES’ decision to establish a working group led by the HRC (women’s rights fall under HRC’s mandate) to examine barriers to women’s participation, raise awareness about women’s role in public life, and increase positive perceptions of women in decision-making and non-traditional roles fills a clear gap in this space.

Challenge: Protecting and advancing women’s human rights and equality in the Maldives faces particular challenges given the status and capacity of civil society and the limited number of public officials interested in carrying forward a gender equality mandate. Women’s rights falls under the mandate of the Human Rights Commission, but even the dedicated gender champion among the commissioners expressed a sobering, realistic picture of the challenges this mandate faces in the Maldives. This official noted rising religious conservatism and the effective network groups with this ideology have for disseminating information and conducting advocacy that is counter to progress on gender equality. Moderate voices are apparently hard to find--as the commissioner noted, “we would like to work with moderate religious figures, *if we can find any*”—and between 2005 and 2011 human rights surveys conducted by the HRC documented a worrisome *decrease* in the number of women who believe that men and women should have equal rights (Right Side of Life Survey).

“We would like to work with moderate religious figures, if we can find any.”
- Human Rights Commission

While it is unclear that space for women in social, political, and economic life is closing dramatically (compared to baselines that were already low), multiple groups interviewed by the team expressed concern that growing religious conservatism combined with persistent structural issues (e.g. lack of child care, very high percentage of female-headed households) presented a serious concern for holding onto or making further progress toward gender equality in these spheres.

Despite their dedication, the segment of civil society focused on gender equality and female empowerment issues is very under-developed and will require significant capacity building and support. The two most prominent organizations in this space

(Hope for Women, Voice of Women), have only one full-time staff member between them, consist mainly of volunteers with other full-time occupations, and have obtained/managed very little grant money. There is at present no large scale women's or gender equality movement and the few actors in this space will likely benefit from the tailored support and increased coordination and collaboration going forward under MESA.

Strength: While the Panel for Social Harmony faces challenges in fulfilling its original mandate, one positive aspect of the initiative is the gender balance of the panel itself. The panel is comprised of roughly equal numbers of accomplished women and men who model positive values with respect to gender equality and female empowerment, including the capacity of women to pursue professional careers and participate in civic life, and of men and women to bring their respective skills and perspectives together to work collaboratively on public challenges.

Environmental Analysis

7. To what extent have steps been taken to meet mandatory 22 CFR 216 environmental compliance requirements (ADS 204) during project design and implementation?

Programming implemented with CCF funding received a categorical exclusion per 22 CFR 216.2(c)(2)(i), as they consist of training, technical assistance, and dialogue activities. The Mission monitoring and close-out activities should inquire about the status of limited amounts of computer equipment purchased with project funding (e.g. proper use and disposal). Additionally, given the large number of training and community dialogue activities, it would be useful to share the 'green' meeting checklist with partners and encourage them to incorporate some of these best practices. [SEE ANNEX 3]

Monitoring and Evaluation Analysis

8. Describe current monitoring and evaluation systems in place for CCF-funded initiatives including their methodology, efficacy, challenges and coordination with implementing partners and its influence on program management.

Challenge: UNDP indicated difficulties in identifying appropriate indicators for activities under the social cohesion pillar, including USAID-supported community-based dialogue activities. The indicators tracked to date capture results only at the output level: number of dialogue platforms established and number of meetings. Tracking results only at this level is sub-optimal and represents a lost opportunity to understand the value of these activities for supporting objectives under the pillar (e.g. managing intergroup tensions, increasing trust in public institutions, etc.).

While no overall impact or performance evaluation is tee'd up for the IGP, it appears that individual components are associated with monitoring strategies that will yield useful information for future program planning in the Maldives (e.g. access to justice baseline).

Missed Opportunity: Given that IGP has a geographical focus on 5 atolls, it would have been possible to design an impact evaluation strategy using non-intervention atolls as a comparison group (or even among intervention atolls if the initiation of activities was sufficiently staggered). Understanding the imperative of rolling out interventions quickly in complex crisis environments, this approach is not always practical or cost-efficient; however,

“It would have been possible to design an impact evaluation strategy using non-intervention atolls as a comparison group”

CONCLUSIONS

The team observed an IFES program well managed, executed, and adapted to the evolving political environment as envisaged by CCF. The intervention was timely and addressed three fully executed elections providing critical support to independent commissions and civil society. In our estimation, IFES support to the Elections Commission was an important supporter of the organization’s capacity to conduct a legitimate poll despite significant judicial and institutional interference. Despite defeat, it was difficult for the opposition to question the legitimacy of the commission or results forcing an acceptance of outcomes and ceding of power. The credible, legitimate conduct of elections by the EC and conciliatory tone of the MDP following defeat in Presidential, Parliamentary, and Local Council elections were often cited as the reason violence during this period was minimal.

Extensively noted as crucial in consolidating and new democracy following a long dictatorship, Maldives clearly suffers from a lack of sustained investment in capacity building of civil society. Efforts like IFES in support of civil society and independent commissions, key components of any pluralistic society, need continued support if Maldivian democracy is to consolidate and survive. The United States, as a key partner and stabilizing force in the region, could play a larger role by retaining even modest investments in Maldivian institutions. This would not only assist Maldivian interests, but serve longer-term US security and trade objectives in the region.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Programmatic

For the Mission/Embassy: USAID Sri Lanka and Maldives should conduct regular partner's meeting and donor coordination engagement in Male. It was clear, based on or gathering of partners, that each other's geographical and contextual scopes were not always broadly understood or supportive. In one particular case, two partners had not previously met.

For the Mission/Embassy: US Embassy Sri Lanka Maldives Public Affairs Section (PAS) might have better leveraged its resources via USAID partners in Maldives and not UNDP to support capacity building of Civil Society. UNDP's approach has been characterized as "one-size fits all" with boxed training provided by expensive out-of-town experts on two occasions to date. Most of the USG resources have supported international expert and local civil society travel. With IFES, PAS could have had an on the ground team with local context and capability of providing organizational assessments leading to customized training based on individual needs.

For the Mission/Embassy: DOJ Technical Advisor at the Prosecutor General's Office and IFES should be coordinating ways to share programmatic strategies to strengthen the electoral process. A key challenge for the EC, the Prosecutor General's Office, may be addressed by leveraging the experience and relationships of the DoJ Technical Advisor.

Gender

For UNDP: Following UN-organized community engagements in Laamu Atoll, the panel recommended that facilitators should strive to design sessions that offer males and females opportunities to participate meaningfully by:

- Striving for gender balance among training and dialogue facilitators. In the case of UNDP, there seems to be gender balance in the overall pool, but the fact that facilitators have other full-time jobs and are based in Malé, presents challenges for achieving a mixed gender pool of facilitators for any given set of community consultations.
- Focusing on the quality of participation for both males and females in training and dialogue sessions, in addition to the overall presence/balance of men and women in the room. Careful attention to power dynamics is needed and this is particularly important for dialogues where decisions are being made about community priorities and how to address them.
- Consider separate sessions (in addition to integrated sessions) for groups that may feel unable to share frank viewpoints. If separate sessions are desirable but not practical due to financial or other constraints, facilitators may wish to employ approaches that allow for indirect sharing of viewpoints that might otherwise go

unexpressed verbally (e.g., anonymous questionnaires or voting, collecting feedback in advance, offering email address so that participants can follow up with additional information after initial meeting).

For UNDP and The Panel for National Harmony: Explore ways to utilize the panel as part of youth civic education and women's participation activities moving forward under IFES and UNDP mechanisms. For example, the panel members might be a useful resource for the planned IFES research project on barriers to women's political participation or as participants in civic education activities (much of what they are doing at this point). *Note: A few panel members privately expressed that they felt the panel would benefit from stronger affiliation with the UNDP IGP activities, though other influential members believe that maintaining independence from the UN is necessary to support the panel's position of neutrality.*

Monitoring and Evaluation

For the Mission and UNDP: It would be useful for the Mission to follow up with UNDP as their thinking evolves on how to measure the impact of these dialogue platforms and offer input as appropriate. UNDP noted a tentative plan to look at improvements in access to services to gauge the success of community dialogues, which are intended as a platform to identify community priorities and facilitate collection action toward that goal. However, the problems identified will vary across islands and not all will deal directly with services; therefore, it may make more sense to focus on perception indicators that measure participants' or community members satisfaction with the dialogue process as a constructive way for addressing problems/priorities overall or perceptions of improvements in particular areas (e.g. streetlights, crime, public transport, etc.). Given that baseline data does not appear to have been collected for these activities, information will be limited to retrospective of informants.

For the Mission: Mission or regional M/E specialist should conduct regular engagements with partners to better streamline data collection methodologies and content. This strategy has worked well in other contexts.

For the CCF Secretariat: CCF Secretariat could strengthen its monitoring and evaluation, justification, and management of country portfolios by making the following requirements during the application and awards process:

- Require the identification of specific contract line items for more effective M/E of funded activities and objectives in the award letter.
- Require successful applicants to supply partner quarterly, annual, and operational reports and analysis conducted under program funding

- Basis of future programming should be robust analysis and not reports or commitments made by DOS officers. USAID programming would have been better served initially in Maldives with a governance, conflict, and/or gender assessment.

Complex Crises Fund – Mid-Cycle Portfolio Review – Maldives

Statement of Work

April 2014

I. Purpose and Overview

All CCF-funded activities have a Mid-Cycle Portfolio Review (MPR), in which a team examines specific CCF-funded initiatives in the context of the operational environment while taking into consideration issues that may shape the future direction of these initiatives. USAID will conduct an MPR for its CCF-funded activities in Maldives between May and June 2014. The assessment will review current activities³ while considering emerging issues, constraints, program assumptions, and other relevant critical events to foster creativity and encourage flexibility to re-direct activities in exigent circumstances. In total, a continuous analysis of the country's conditions better informs programming at three distinct but interconnected levels: (1) overall goal; (2) program objectives; and (3) activities funded.

This SOW outlines some initial questions at the strategic and program levels, and includes a notional timetable for the process.

II. Contextual Background

The fragile nature of the democratic transition in the Maldives was made clear by the unanticipated February 7, 2012 transfer of power. The transfer of power was considered fully constitutional by the current coalition government and its majority in the People's Majlis (Parliament) but alleged to be illegitimate and obtained under duress by the former President Nasheed. The political crisis that ensued has unleashed hostile reactions in the country, polarized the country into two antagonistic sides, given rise to weekly and sometimes daily protests, increased tensions and insecurity, hardened political stances witnessed for the past several months, and generated instability in the political sphere.

To address these challenges, USAID Sri Lanka and Maldives initiated a \$3,000,000 CCF supported intervention to ensure a unified effort to prevent a protracted political conflict and democratic backsliding after the fragility of the democratic transition in Maldives was revealed by the intensely disputed transfer of power in February 2012. The program objectives are to: (1) support to high-level political party talks in order to stabilize the current political environment and consolidate democracy; (2) mitigate the risk of violent political competition by support for non-partisan discussion forums of civic and business leaders, as well as representatives from political parties and GOM agencies; (3) support for civil society to advance reconciliation and the democratic transition; and (4) support to independent commissions to strengthen the institutional culture of transparency, accountability and oversight.

Component 1: Support Political Reconciliation in Maldives (\$300,000)

Component 2: Mitigate the Risk of Violent Political Competition (\$900,000)

Component 3: Increase Civic Participation to Promote the Democratic Transition (\$1,300,000)

Component 4: Bolster Support for the Independent Commissions (Electoral, Human Rights, Police Integrity, Anti-Corruption Commissions) and the institutional culture of transparency, accountability and oversight (\$500,000)

III. Methodology

The principle process methodology for the MPR is a “snap-shot” peer review process that fosters a direct and constructive dialogue on the status of recent achievements, future challenges, and longer-term direction of CCF-funded activities. These reviews are intended to provide the Mission with a third-party analysis by a team experienced in complex crisis environments to analyze and evaluate the CCF-funded

³ The Maldives Elections Support Activity (MESA), UNDP Dialog and Elections Program

project at the program and strategic levels mid-way through the lifecycle of the project. This process provides the country team with a timely perspective, feedback, and strategic recommendations for consideration to make any possible course adjustments to the project prior to the project's end. The review also gives the CCF Secretariat the information necessary for making informed decisions regarding future resources, and allows the CCF Secretariat to be an effective advocate for the program to a variety of audiences.

While in Washington, the team will review documents shared and interview relevant stakeholders, including implementing partner staff, in-country staff, USG counterparts, and others involved with or aware of the CCF funded program. In the field, the team will interview relevant government officials, other donor staff, implementing partners, grantees and beneficiaries and review field-based activities with key stakeholders with specific emphasis on normative evaluation questions outlined later in this statement of work. This iterative process will result in a final document and presentation of findings, conclusions, and recommendations.⁴

IV. Questions

The MPR will address the following key questions with the understanding that other issues may arise prompting a series of different questions that will better serve the fluid country context.

a. Strategic Analysis

1. Describe how political and contextual changes since the launch of the CCF-funded programs resulted in any changes in overall strategy, approach (Theory of Change) or activities.

Illustrative Sub Questions:

- a. Describe the implications of emerging issues and their impact on program strategy, approach, and implementation with a view toward specific initiative timelines.
 - b. Are the program's assumptions and objectives still valid given changes in the operating environment or do they need to be re-evaluated?
2. How do CCF-funded programs provide synergy with initiative undertaken by other donors and the Government of Maldives?
 3. To what extent have CCF-funded programs supported the overall development objectives identified in the Country Development and Cooperation Strategy and Results Framework?

b. Program Analysis

1. To what extent have CCF programs supported initial assumptions and theory of change as identified in the original funding request?
2. From conception to initiation, describe program implementation including any institutional successes and challenges.

Illustrative Sub Questions:

- a. Provide stakeholder and beneficiary views on the implementation.
- b. Describe any lessons learned and/or best practices identified since program start-up with regard to initial analysis, assumptions, and program design (target areas, actors, and issues)?
- c. What human, financial, and time resources are required (and why) in order to maximize program performance in the remaining months?

c. Gender Analysis

1. To what extent have program design and activities provided for gender equity?

Illustrative Sub Questions:

- a. How is the National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) implemented in the program? Identify lessons learned and/or best practices if any.
- b. What does the gender mainstreaming approach involve?

⁴ IAW USAID Evaluation Policy – January 2011 and ADS 203

- c. Identify the areas where gender inequality is of greatest concern as well as successful examples of gender equality and female empowerment.
- d. **Environmental Analysis**
 - 1. To what extent have steps been taken to meet mandatory 22 CFR 216 environmental compliance requirements (ADS 204) during project design and implementation?
- e. **M&E Analysis**
 - 1. Describe current monitoring and evaluation systems in place for CCF-funded initiatives including their methodology, efficacy, challenges and coordination with implementing partners and its influence on program management.
 - Illustrative Sub Questions:
 - a. To what extent does USAID Sri Lanka & Maldives possess institutional capacity to monitor and evaluate activities?
 - b. Illuminate mission and IP documentation of program efficacy.
 - c. Describe mechanisms for learning and feedback from both internal USG and external sources (IPs) and how these lessons are incorporated into future programming.

V. Deliverables

The team's principal deliverable will be a written report, approximately ten to fifteen pages in length, identifying and analyzing key accomplishments, challenges, constraints and opportunities the program is contending along with findings and recommendations to help guide future activity. Prior to field mission conclusion, the team will meet with the USAID/Sri Lanka & Maldives DGO Director to review the intended content of the written report. Upon return to USAID/Washington, the team will orally brief the DCHA/AA, the CCF Monitoring and Review Committee, the Asia Bureau/AA and interested staff on relevant actions, findings and recommendations.

VI. Team Composition

Lead/Facilitator: Michael Haines – DCHA/ Office of Policy, Programs, and Management
 Member: Ms. Amber Ussery – DCHA/Office of Policy, Programs, and Management

VII. Anticipated Report Outline

- a. Executive Summary
- b. Purpose, Scope, and Methodology
- c. Political Background and Country Context
- d. Brief Description of CCF-funded Programs
- e. Findings
- f. Conclusions
- g. Lessons Learned & Best Practices
- h. Recommendations
- i. Annexes

VIII. Schedule of Mid-Term Review 2014

10 April 2014:	SOW Finalized
29 April – 10 May 2014:	Field Interviews and Consultations, Debrief with USAID/Sri Lanka & Maldives and US Embassy (29 April – 2 May in Sri Lanka, 2-7 May 2014 in Maldives, 7-9 May 2014 Sri Lanka)
12-16 May 2014:	Desk Review, Interviews in DC
19-23 May 2014:	Drafting of Final Report
26-30 May 2014:	Submit draft of Final Report to USAID/Sri Lanka & Maldives for review/comment
2-6 June 2014:	Submit final report to DCHA/PPM for review
9-13 June 2014:	Final team debriefs USAID/Washington

VIV. Scheduling and Logistics

Team accommodation, transportation, and appropriate partner engagements will be coordinated by team facilitator and respective field and Washington based stakeholders.

Complex Crises Fund: Maldives

Mid-Cycle Portfolio Review

Meeting List

Date	Location	Organization	Positions	Comment
1-Apr-2014	Washington, DC	USAID	Office Dir., Country Desk Officer	Overview Briefing
9-Apr-2014	Washington, DC	IFES	MESA HQ Asia D/Dir., South Asia Desk Officer	Overview Briefing
10-Apr-2014	Washington, DC	DOS	Country Desk Officers	Overview Briefing
29-Apr-2014	Colombo	USAID	GVP Director, Mission CO, MESA AOR	Overview Briefing
29-Apr-2014	Colombo	USAID	EXO	Security Briefing, Mission/Budget Overview
30-Apr-2014	Colombo	USAID	MESA AOR, UNDP A/AOR	Programs Overview
30-Apr-2014	Colombo	DoD	Sr. Defense Attache	Programs Overview, Context Briefing
30-Apr-2014	Colombo	USAID	DG Team Leader	Programs Overview
30-Apr-2014	Colombo	IFES	COP MESA	Introduction Meeting
30-Apr-2014	Colombo	USAID	Mission Director	Mission In-briefing
2-May-2014	Male	UNDP	Governance Technical Advisor	Introduction Meeting
3-May-2014	Laamu Atoll - Gan	UNDP	Dialog Facilitators	Program Overview
3-May-2014	Laamu Atoll - Gan	UNDP	Dialog Facilitators, Laamu Police	Initial Dialog Consultation
3-May-2014	Laamu Atoll - Gan	UNDP	Dialog Facilitators, FENAKA Power Company	Initial Dialog Consultation
3-May-2014	Laamu Atoll - Gan	UNDP	Dialog Facilitators, 5 Educators	Initial Dialog Consultation
4-May-2014	Male	UNDP	UNDP Governance Leadership Team, USAID Colombo	Initial Dialog Consultation
4-May-2014	Male	Panel for National Harmony	Panel, USAID Team, UNDP	Program Overview and Consultation
5-May-2014	Male	IFES	Meeting with MESA Leadership Team	Initial Dialog Consultation
5-May-2014	Male	Transparency Maldives	Leadership, USAID Teams	Program Overview and Consultation
5-May-2014	Male	US Army	CMC, USAID Team	Activity Overview
5-May-2014	Male	UNDP	USAID Team, IGP TEam	Initial Meeting Follow-up
5-May-2014	Male	DI Youth Movement	Leadership, USAID Teams	Program Overview and Consultation
5-May-2014	Male	Hope for Women	Leadership, USAID Teams	Program Overview and Consultation
5-May-2014	Male	Panel for	Panel, USAID Team,	Initial Meeting Follow-up

		National Harmony	UNDP	
6-May-2014	Male	Anti-Corruption Commission	IFES, ACC Leadership, USAID Team	Program and Context Overview
6-May-2014	Male	Democracy House	DH Leadership, IFES, USAID Team	Program Overview and Consultation
6-May-2014	Male	Human Rights Commission	HRC Leadership, IFES, USAID Team	Program and Context Overview
6-May-2014	Male	Elections Commission	EC Leadership, IFES, USAID Team	Program and Context Overview
6-May-2014	Male	Voice for Women	VM Leadership, IFES, USAID Team	Program and Context Overview
6-May-2014	Male	IFES	IFES Leadership, USAID Team	Outbrief
7-May-2014	Colombo	USAID	USAID GVP Team	Outbrief
7-May-2014	Colombo	USAID	USAID Mission Director, Leadership Team	Outbrief
7-May-2014	Colombo	Department of State	Ambassador, DCM, Pol & Econ Officers, USAID MD	Outbrief
8-May-2014	Colombo	Department of State	Political Officer	Outbrief
8-May-2014	Colombo	USAID	Program and Policy Support Team	Program and Context Overview
8-May-2014	Colombo	USAID	DVP Leadership	Outbrief, Tasker Assistance
9-May-2014	Colombo	Search for Common Ground	Country Representative	Program Overview and Consultation
9-May-2014	Colombo	USAID	DVP Leadership	Outbrief, Tasker Assistance

Annex 3 – Green Meeting Planning Checklist

Green Meeting Planning Checklist

Environmentally aware meetings and events are those planned in such a way as to eliminate, reduce, or recycle waste. This Checklist is intended to heighten the environmental consciousness of event planners and demonstrate the advantages of conducting environmentally aware events. This Checklist was adopted from the US Environmental Protection Agency recommendation of the Green Meeting Industrial Council (GMIC), <http://www.epa.gov/oppt/greenmeetings/pubs/basic.html>.

Consider the following as you select your environmental priorities:

Preventing and Reducing Waste

- Focus on reducing waste, given limited in-country recycling facilities.
- Use double-sided printing, recycled content -where available- for promotional materials and handouts.
- Avoid mass distribution of handouts. Allow attendees to request copies or provide digital copies via CD, thumb drive, or website.
- Provide reusable name badges.
- Purchase large volume plastic bottles of water to dispense into glasses at each table, instead of individual sized plastic bottles
- Other actions: _____

Recycling and Managing Waste

- Where facilities exist, collect paper and recyclable beverage containers in meeting areas.
- Collect cardboard and paper in exhibit areas.
- Collect cardboard, beverage containers, steel cans, and plastics in food vending areas.
- Separate out organic waste for composting, Provide composting guidelines for conference venues.
- If reusable containers are not used, encourage use of recyclable beverage containers.
- Other actions: _____

Conserving Energy and Reducing Traffic

- Seek naturally lighted meeting and exhibit spaces.
- Provide shuttle service from hotels to the event site.
- Choose meeting sites that have on-site housing.
- Other actions: _____

Contracting Food Service and Lodging

- Plan food service needs carefully to avoid unnecessary waste.
- Consider use of durable food service items instead of disposables.
- Donate excess food to charitable organizations, including planning ahead via SOW/contract with the conference venue to ensure this happens.
- Work with non-replacement of linens, soaps, etc.
- Other actions: _____

Buying Environmentally Aware Products

- Use recycled paper for promotional materials and handouts, where available.
- Consider selling or providing refillable containers for beverages.
- Provide reusable containers for handouts or samples (pocket or file folders, cloth bags).
- Where reusable items are not feasible, select products that are made from recovered materials and that also can be recycled.
- Other actions: _____

Educating Participants and Exhibitors

- Request the use of recycled and recyclable handouts or giveaways.
- Request that unused items be collected for use at another event.
- Encourage participants to recycle materials at the event.
- Reward participation by communicating environmental savings achieved.
- Other actions: _____