

Increasing Economic Benefits for Women fish processors by IPNLF-Maldives



Through a scoping study conducted in 2018 which identified up to 60-70 women that were involved in tuna processing at different levels in Maldives, it was found out that all respondents had more than 20 years of experience in fish processing and significantly contribute to household income and the fisheries sector in the Maldives. Despite these contributions it was also found out that these women face several challenges to expand their small-scale businesses, and reap

the maximum economic benefits. The proposed innovation project by IPNLF-Maldives is to develop an e-commerce platform that would promote and expand the small-scale business for the women fish processors in Maldives. This project also aims to develop and foster new skill sets and enhance existing business skill sets of the women fish processors, so they can take ownership of the co-developed online platform and continue their business operations well after the project ends. Capacity building will aim to ensure momentum is sustained through the series of sequential trainings targeted at women fish processors on digital and financial literacy, and on building business acumen and confidence. They will further receive training on marketing, branding, and quality assurance so that they are able to compete at a national and international level.

The project started in July 2022 and it is planned to be completed by end of May 2024. The project team achieved the following up till now:

Current status and achievements

- Project Inception Workshop in one of the Maldives piloted Island (Gemanafushi).
- Site visits and interviews with women fisherfolk and stakeholders in the piloted island
- Developed a ToR for software developer and procurement process completed to hire the mobile App developer
- Create social media handles and accounts on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook for the project awareness messages.
- Developed a ToR for videographer and procurement process completed to hire that expert to develop awareness videos and multimedia produces on awareness raising
- Consultations with stakeholders and women fisherfolk on development of Mobile App. Main functions.

The success of the e-commerce platform depends on how well it can be tailored to meet the needs of women processors in the islands, but also how effective the efforts can be sustained beyond the life of the Project. It is critical that issues of hygiene, quality and product standardization be addressed urgently for women-processor produce to sell outside the local island. To this end, IPNLF-Maldives is closely working with Business Centre Cooperation (BCC) and Maldives Business Network (MBN) established under the Ministry of Economic Development for developing and promoting micro, and small local enterprises throughout the Maldives. BCC is currently developing a “Home-based Processor Regulation” that would require completion of a basic training in hygiene to allow registration under the competent authority for legally selling products throughout the Maldives. The mobile App will be designed to be multilingual and in Open Source to make it usable in and modifiable for other SIDS for replicability and scalability.