

Environmental Monitoring Report

Project Number: 55086-001
Semi-annual Report
May 2023

Maldives: Responsive COVID-19 Vaccination for Recovery Project under the Asia Pacific Vaccine Access Facility

Prepared by the Ministry of Health for the Ministry of Finance and the Asian Development Bank.

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CURRENCY EQUIVALENTS

(as of 17 May 2023)

Currency unit	–	Rufiyaa (Rf)
Rf1.00	=	\$0.06484
\$1.00	=	Rf15.4236

ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	–	Asian Development Bank
APVAX	–	Asia Pacific Vaccine Access Facility of the Asian Development Bank
CEMP	–	construction environmental management plan
COVID-19	–	corona virus disease 2019
EMP	–	environmental management plan
EPI	–	expanded program of immunization
HSE	–	health, safety, and environment
IEE	–	initial environmental examination
MOF	–	Ministry of Finance
MOH	–	Ministry of Health
PMU	–	project management unit
PIC	–	project investment component
SEMR	–	semi-annual environmental monitoring report
SPS	–	Safeguard Policy Statement
TA	–	technical assistance

NOTE

In this report, "\$" refers to United States dollars unless otherwise stated.

This environmental monitoring report is a document of the borrower. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent those of ADB's Board of Directors, Management, or staff, and may be preliminary in nature.

In preparing any country program or strategy, financing any project, or by making any designation of or reference to a particular territory or geographic area in this document, the Asian Development Bank does not intend to make any judgments as to the legal or other status of any territory or area.

Executive Summary

1. The semi-annual environmental monitoring report (SEMR) is prepared by the PMU for the monitoring of the Responsive COVID-19 Vaccination for Recovery Project under the Asia Pacific Vaccine Access Facility (the project). This SEMR provides the status of project, presents preparation and implementation of environmental management, mitigation and monitoring actions, and reports status of compliance with environmental management plans (EMPs) and loan/grant covenants. This project was approved by the ADB on 14 September 2022 and became effective on 24 October 2022, with B categorization on environment.
2. The central vaccine cold chain facility at Hulhumale is a six-storey building with a footprint of 500 sqm. The facility will include walk-in coolers, provision for management of waste associated with the Expanded Program for Immunization (EPI) and COVID-19 vaccination program related waste. The facility will have parking space for two refrigerated trucks. Furthermore, the facility will include a 100-person capacity auditorium for trainings to be conducted through the EPI.
3. Some site-specific and temporary environmental impacts are envisaged during construction and operational phase of the central vaccine cold-chain facility in Hulhumale'. The main impact anticipated for construction phase are from dewatering of groundwater for construction of foundation, excavation, other construction activities, construction equipment and machineries and construction waste.
4. The operational phase impacts are anticipated from the operation of central vaccine cold-chain storage facility, management of vaccine related waste and transport of vaccines via speed boats and refrigerated trucks procured under the project.
5. An Environmental Management Plan (EMP) has been prepared proposed for the construction of the central vaccine cold-chain storage facility. A monitoring plan for the safeguards has also been prepared. Furthermore, a stakeholder engagement plan and a two-tier grievance redress mechanism will be adopted.
6. This is the first SEMR, covering the period November 2022 to April 2023. In this monitoring period, the firm for conducting the detailed engineering design of the vaccine cold storage facility is still under recruitment, hence the procurement and civil works have not yet started. Succeeding section discussions of this SEMR have no update or activities to report. Updates on the progress of the procurement of civil works and consultants will be reported in the next SEMR.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Project Name and Objectives

1. The Responsive COVID-19 Vaccination for Recovery Project under the Asia Pacific Vaccine Access Facility (APVAX) (the project) ¹ provides the Government of Maldives (the government) with needed financing to sustain and upgrade its national coronavirus disease (COVID-19) vaccination program and the routine expanded program of immunization (EPI) through the project investment component (PIC) modality of the Asia Pacific Vaccine Access Facility (APVAX) of the Asian Development Bank (ADB). The ongoing technical assistance (TA) will help strengthen the country's COVID-19 pandemic response capacity.²

2. The project is aligned with five of the operational priorities of ADB's Strategy 2030:³ (i) addressing remaining poverty and reducing inequalities; (ii) accelerating progress in gender equality; (iii) tackling climate change, building climate and disaster resilience, and enhancing environmental sustainability; (iv) strengthening governance and institutional capacity; and (v) fostering regional cooperation and integration. It is consistent with ADB's country partnership strategy, 2020–2024 for Maldives,⁴ which prioritizes the strengthening of Maldives' health system.

3. Maldives has fully met APVAX access criteria by (i) demonstrating the adverse impact of the COVID-19 pandemic; (ii) completing a needs assessment, including an updated vaccination allocation and prioritization plan for booster vaccination program and an incremental medical waste management plan, acceptable to ADB; (iii) providing a governor's letter confirming the government's commitment to implement the plans and ensuring compliance with revised APVAX eligibility criteria for ADB financing; and (iv) setting up an effective development partner coordination mechanism with a clear role for ADB.

4. This project is a grant approved by the ADB on 14 September 2022 and became effective on 24 October 2022. The grant has three outputs.

5. **Output 1: Capacity of vaccine storage and transport system increased.** This output intends to strengthen the vaccine cold chain storage and delivery capacity of the Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI), which is equivalent to the national routine immunization program of the country to accommodate the increasing volume of vaccines due to the ongoing COVID-19 mass vaccination. Specifically, this output will support the construction of a state-of-the-art, climate-resilient central vaccine cold storage facility with adequate space for dry item storage, maintenance unit, office staff, cold chain equipment maintenance biomedical unit, vaccine waste management, backup center for national immunization data, and facilities for EPI staff training in Hulhumale. The new central cold storage facility will replace the existing temporary central cold chain storage facility in Male, which now lacks the required storage capacity and is in a decrepit condition. In addition, the output will also support the EPI vaccine distribution system and COVID-19 vaccination program with the provision of 7 speed boats, 1 each to be given to each of the 6 regions across the country and 1 for the greater Male area, 2 refrigerated trucks for medical goods distribution, and 2 vans for managing immunization services in populated larger islands, including greater Male area.

¹ ADB. 2022. [Maldives: Responsive COVID-19 Vaccination for Recovery Project under the Asia Pacific Vaccine Access Facility](#). Manila.

² ADB. 2021. [Maldives: Supporting COVID-19 Response and Vaccination Program](#). Manila.

³ ADB. 2018. [Strategy 2030: Achieving a Prosperous, Inclusive, Resilient, and Sustainable Asia and the Pacific](#). Manila.

⁴ ADB. 2019. [Maldives: Country Partnership Strategy \(2020–2024\)](#). Manila.

6. **Output 2: Information management of the EPI strengthened for COVID-19 vaccination and routine immunization.** This output intends to digitalize the vaccination information management system of EPI and COVID-19 vaccination program to enable timely and efficient planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. The output will ensure that the immunization-related information systems currently developed by WHO and UNICEF will be digitally linked to the National health data system and implemented across all concerned health facilities. Specifically, this output will (i) support the expansion of the national immunization data center by providing the required IT equipment to the center; (ii) support the design and fixing of the software driven wide area networks and the local area networks as needed by the data center to link all islands, atolls, and the Male region to receive/share health data; (iii) set up a backup server center, which will also be established in the new central cold storage facility that will be financed by the project; and (iv) support the computerization of the collection of individual immunization data at all health care centers by procuring required tablets for the public health staff to enter the immunization data as well as other public health data.

7. **Output 3: Human resource capacity of the EPI enhanced.** This output intends to strengthen the human resource capacity of the EPI and COVID-19 vaccination program considering both short- and long-term perspectives by financing several contract staff to support the central EPI program, national immunization data center, and the biomedical services unit of the Ministry of Health (MOH). The contract staff will temporarily fill vacant key positions while the MOH is recruiting and training new permanent staff. The output will also provide local and international training to candidates of those permanent staff positions to ensure retention of these newly recruited staff in these positions at the end of the third year of the project. Furthermore, the output will also carry out local and international training of existing EPI staff, workshops, site visits and quarterly meetings to review project implementation progress and will also help facilitate the project steering committee and routine development coordination discussions.

B. Environmental Category as per ADB Safeguard Policy Statement, 2009

8. The project is classified as category B according to ADB Safeguards Policy Statement (SPS) 2009 and the impacts of all subprojects are assessed through the Initial Environmental Examination (IEE) as per ADB SPS 2009. An IEE has been prepared for the cold chain facility based on preliminary design and will be updated once the detailed design is undertaken. The environmental impacts of the project include standard construction-related impacts such as a temporary increase in noise levels; air, soil, and water pollution risks; and health and safety risks to workers which are site- specific. During operations, waste generation and health and safety risks have been identified as project impacts. These can be readily mitigated following national requirements and international good practice mitigation set out in the environment management plan (EMP). A national environmental screening was done by the proponent of the project. The outcome of the National Environmental Screening process confirms that no EIA nor IEE is required to meet the national environmental due diligence requirements. However, an Environmental Management Plan has to be submitted for clearance from the Environmental Protection Agency before any works commence. Other applicable local environmental requirements will be obtained prior to the commencement of civil works. During preparation of IEE, a series of stakeholder consultations were conducted from March 2022 to June 2022 in the form of physical meetings. A total of 9 sessions were held in which vulnerable groups such as women participated and also representatives from MOH, Environmental Protection Agency, Ministry of National Planning, Housing, and Infrastructure and Housing Development Corporation (HDC). The IEE has been disclosed on the ADB website and the MOH websites. MOH will locally disclose the IEE and will establish a grievance redress mechanism. MOH's capacity to manage safeguards during implementation will be strengthened through training to be provided through

the technical assistance (footnote 2) and consultant support. MOH will appoint an environment and social safeguards focal in the project management unit (PMU) to supervise and monitor project implementation. Environmental monitoring reports will be submitted to ADB semi-annually during construction and annually during operation.

C. About this Report

9. This is the semi-annual environmental monitoring report (SEMR) prepared by the PMU for the monitoring period of November 2022 to April 2023. This SEMR provides the status of project, presents preparation and implementation of environmental management, mitigation and monitoring actions, and reports status of compliance with environmental management plans (EMPs) and loan covenants. In this monitoring period, the firm for conducting the detailed engineering design of the vaccine cold storage facility is still under recruitment, hence the procurement and civil works have not yet started. **Succeeding sections of this report are not applicable and to be updated in the next SEMR.**

II. PROJECT SAFEGUARDS TEAM

10. The Ministry of Finance (MOF) is the executing agency, and the MOH is the implementing agency. The MOH administers the grant proceeds and is responsible for procurement, financial management, and overall project implementation activities. A PMU comprising officials from concerned departments and PMU consultants and staff (financed via Output 3 funds of the project) is set up within the Policy Implementation and International Relations Division of the MOH. A national project steering committee chaired by the Minister of MOH will provide strategic guidance, review performance, and take timely strategic measures to achieve the project outputs through the PMU. The project will be implemented over 3 years (2022–2025).

11. By the end of Q1, 2023, all the positions of PMU were filled. The advertisement for the environment and social safeguards consultant has been posted and PMU is now in the process of shortlisting and evaluation. The environment and social safeguards consultant is expected to be on board by Q2, 2023.

III. OVERALL PROJECT PACKAGE PROGRESS AND STATUS

12. The firm for conducting the detailed engineering design of the vaccine cold storage facility is still under recruitment, hence the procurement of civil works has not yet started. Updates and applicable revisions will be done in the next SEMR. Updates will be provided in the next SEMR, as applicable.

Package Number	Components/List of Works	Type of Contract (specify if DBO, DB or civil works)	Status of Implementation (specify if Preliminary Design, Detailed Design, On-going Construction, Completed Works, or O&M phase)	Contract Status (specify if under bidding or contract awarded)	If Ongoing Construction	
					%Physical Progress	Expected Completion Date

IV. STATUS OF IEE PER PACKAGE

13. Not applicable at this monitoring period and will be updated in the next SEMR.

Package-wise Implementation Status

Package Number	Final IEE based on Detailed Design				Site-specific EMP (or Construction EMP) approved by Project Director? (Yes/No)	Remarks
	Not yet due <i>(detailed design not yet completed)</i>	Submitted to ADB <i>(provide date of submission)</i>	Disclosed on project website <i>(provide link)</i>	Final IEE provided to Contractor/s <i>(Yes/No)</i>		

V. COMPLIANCE STATUS WITH NATIONAL/STATE/LOCAL STATUTORY ENVIRONMENTAL REQUIREMENTS

14. Not applicable at this monitoring period and will be updated in the next SEMR.

Package No.	Statutory Environmental Requirements	Status of Compliance <i>(Specify if obtained, submitted and awaiting approval, application not yet submitted)</i>	Validity Date(s) <i>(if already obtained)</i>	Action Required	Specific Conditions that will require environmental monitoring

Schedule No. and Item <i>(see Grant Agreement and list provisions relevant to environmental safeguards, core labor standards and occupational health and safety)</i>	Covenant	Status of Compliance	Action Required

VI. COMPLIANCE STATUS WITH THE ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN (refer to EMP tables in approved IEE/s)

15. Not applicable at this monitoring period and will be updated in the next SEMR.

Overall Compliance with SEMP/CEMP

Package No.	Status of SEMP/CEMP Implementation <i>(Excellent/ Satisfactory/ Partially Satisfactory/ Below Satisfactory)</i>	Action Proposed and Additional Measures Required

VII. MONITORING OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS ON PROJECT SURROUNDINGS

16. Not applicable at this monitoring period and will be updated in the next SEMR.

Package No.	Status of Pre-Work Conditions (Recorded / Not Recorded)	Baseline Environmental Conditions (air, water, noise) Documented (Yes / No)	Action Proposed and Additional Measures Required

Air Quality Monitoring Results

Site No.	Date of Testing	Site Location (Provide GPS Coordinates)	Parameters (as required by statutory clearances or as mentioned in the IEE)			Remarks
			PM ₁₀ µg/m ³	SO ₂ µg/m ³	NO ₂ µg/m ³	

Water Quality Monitoring Results

Site No.	Date of Sampling	Site Location	Parameters (as required by statutory clearances or as mentioned in the IEE)						Remarks
			pH	Conductivity µS/cm	BOD mg/L	TSS mg/L	TN mg/L	TP mg/L	

Noise Quality Monitoring Results

Site No.	Date of Testing	Site Location	LA _{eq} (dBA) (as required by statutory clearances or as mentioned in the IEE)		Remarks
			Day Time	Night Time	

VIII. INFORMATION DISCLOSURE AND CONSULTATIONS

17. This will be ensured and updates reported as applicable in the next SEMR.

Date of Consultation	Location	Number of Participants (specify total, male and female)	Issues/Concerns Raised	Response to issues/concerns

IX. GRIEVANCE REDRESS MECHANISM

18. The grievance redress mechanism (GRM) for the project has been developed and was published on the official website of MOH on 18 May 2023, and the grievance submission forms were made available at the MOH counter from 18 May 2023 onwards. Further, the composition of the GRM Committee was initiated during Q2 2023 and is planned to compile during Q2 2023.

X. SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES/CONCERNS IDENTIFIED DURING THE REPORTING PERIOD AND REMEDIAL ACTIONS

19. Not applicable at this monitoring period and will be updated in the next SEMR.

XI. STATUS OF CORRECTIVE ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS SEMR(S)

20. Not applicable at this monitoring period and will be updated in the next SEMR.

Corrective Action Plan Status

Issues/Concerns	Corrective Action	Status	Remarks

XII. APPENDIXES

21. None.