

	energy transport health education and research	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<div></div>
	Migration @ (methodology for tagging under development)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reduction of Inequalities @ (methodology for marker and tagging under development)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Covid-19	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BUDGET INFORMATION				
12. Amounts concerned	Budget line(s) (article, item): 14.020131 (South Asia) Total estimated cost: EUR 5 000 000 Total amount of EU budget contribution EUR 5 000 000			
MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION				
13. Type of financing	Indirect management with the entity(ies) to be selected in accordance with the criteria set out in section 4.4.4			

1.2 Summary of the Action

Reforming the justice sector and fighting corruption is a key priority of the current Maldivian Government, as outlined in the Strategic Action Plan (SAP) (2019-2023) and the subsequent Covid-19 adjusted National Recovery and Resilience Plan 2021-2023. The SAP sets clear objectives and targets on the rule of law and judicial reforms, including the revision of the curricula in Maldivian law schools, asset declaration for judges, appraisal for sitting judges, transitional justice, operationalisation of district courts, prison reforms and rehabilitation (just to name of few). Since then, numerous legislative changes and procedural reforms have been introduced notably to strengthen oversight institutions, improve justice administration and enhance the independence and performance of judges. Some judges have been removed from the Supreme Court while new ones (including two female Justices) have been appointed. The Department of Judicial Administration (DJA) and the Judicial Academy have been removed from the control of the Supreme Court.

Current priority areas in terms of judicial reforms include the further strengthening of justice and court administration (notably through the introduction of circuit and district courts, court automation and construction of new court houses) as well as increasing the capacity of judges and court personnel. Nevertheless, significant qualifications and accountability issues remain, with an overall lack of capacity and resources in the sector. The courts infrastructure is in need of renovation, staff lack proper training and there is no effective way of tracking cases resulting in a huge backlog. Moreover, the geographic isolation of many islands impedes access and the proper functioning of the justice chain, affecting in particular the most vulnerable categories of the population. On corruption, the SAP also outlines key priorities including the need to enhance the integrity and transparency of public officials and institutions. In 2021, the Maldives ranked 85/180 in the Corruption Perception Index compiled by Transparency International¹. Although the current Government has taken some concrete steps in this area, legal and operational constraints still prevail.

The EU has had bilateral relations with Maldives since 2008. The renewed commitment of the Maldives following the 2018 Presidential elections to consolidate democracy, uphold and promote rule of law and human rights were met with the readiness of the EU to strengthen the political dialogue and cooperation. . While cooperation has

¹ Corruption Perception Index 2021, Transparency International: <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2021>.