

Digitally-Driven Resilience

A Strategic Framework for Inclusive Labour Market Transformation in the Maldives

Proposal for MMA Research Conference 2025

Submitted by: Maldicore Group Pvt Ltd in partnership with Atolla.ngo

Category: Labour Markets and Human Capital

Aligned SAP Pillars: Protecting, Collaborating, Future-Focused

1. Introduction & Context

The Maldivian economy is navigating intersecting pressures—climate vulnerability, a shifting global labour landscape, and disruptive digital transformation. Labour market volatility—evident in persistent youth unemployment, gender disparities, and dependence on expatriate workers—highlights systemic vulnerabilities that hinder sustainable growth. Meanwhile, digital transformation is both a disruptor and a potential equalizer, presenting an opportunity to build resilience through inclusive, future-ready workforce strategies.

This study is co-developed by Maldicore and Atolla.ngo, combining strategic diagnostics with grassroots inclusion to create an implementable framework for policy transformation.

2. Objectives

- Assess the current readiness of the Maldivian labour market and institutional landscape for digital-era challenges.
 - Identify capability gaps in digital skills, inclusion, and coordination through structured diagnostic tools.
 - Propose a replicable national strategy to drive workforce transformation, especially for youth, women, and underserved atoll communities.
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3. Methodology

The study will leverage Maldicore's proprietary tools and strategic consulting models:

- **Digital Maturity Index™ (DMI):** Measures digital capacity across key sectors and institutions, using a 6-domain capability model.
- **Strategic Readiness Scorecard™:** Evaluates organizational preparedness for digital and policy transformation.
- **Diagnosis Canvas™ & Discovery Canvas™:** Used to synthesize institutional, operational, and behavioural gaps.
- **Trend Radar™:** Maps medium-term labour and tech disruption signals in the Maldivian context.

Maldicore will lead the strategic and analytical design, while Atolla.ngo facilitates field access and community engagement across outer atolls. Methods include secondary data review, semi-structured stakeholder interviews, and scenario-based policy testing. Preliminary findings are drawn from anonymized field insights from recent Maldicore client engagements in key Maldivian sectors. These tools have been adapted for public-interest research purposes, not commercial promotion.

4. Key Findings (Preliminary Highlights)

Early observations across hospitality, logistics, and financial services—representing high-impact sectors of the economy—suggest the following:

- A **widening digital capability gap** exists between Malé and outer atolls, impacting equitable participation in digital work opportunities.
- **Skills mismatches** persist, particularly in automation, fintech, and e-services—areas with high growth potential.
- **Youth and female workforce segments** face access barriers to reskilling, infrastructure, and work flexibility.
- **Institutional coordination gaps**—between SOEs, ministries, and training agencies—result in fragmented delivery and duplicated investment.

These sectors offer scalable insights relevant to broader policy application, given their size, growth profile, and employment potential.

5. Proposed Framework: Digitally-Driven Labour Transformation

This paper proposes a three-pillar policy framework to align digital inclusion with macroeconomic resilience:

A. Inclusive Skills Infrastructure

- National mobile-first learning platform targeting youth and women.
- Digital literacy and green skills integration into TVET and school curricula.
- Decentralized bootcamps and community learning hubs in atolls.

B. Institutional Alignment Mechanism

- Formation of a **Digital Labour Policy Council** uniting government, SOEs, and private sector.
- Public data dashboards to track workforce development and training outcomes.

C. Employment Activation Incentives

- Wage subsidies for apprenticeships and reskilling in digital sectors.
 - Startup incentives for digital education, e-commerce, and sustainability-focused ventures.
 - Local sourcing mandates in public procurement tied to digital skill participation.
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6. Policy Impact and Constraints

The proposed framework aims to:

- Reduce youth unemployment by 15% in five years through digital inclusion.
- Narrow gender employment gaps by expanding flexible, digital-first work models.
- Improve institutional coordination by introducing structured, data-backed governance models.

Implementation barriers such as inter-agency coordination, budget allocation, and policy inertia are anticipated. The full paper will outline mitigation strategies including phased rollouts, donor engagement, and private platform leverage.

The partnership addresses implementation barriers by ensuring policy recommendations are both data-driven and socially grounded.

7. Conclusion

The Maldives needs a labour policy strategy that transcends sectoral silos and embraces digital transformation not as a challenge, but as a structural solution to inclusion, competitiveness, and resilience. By combining empirical insight, practical tools, and locally grounded foresight, this research proposes a policy blueprint to future-proof Maldivian human capital and institutional frameworks.

This submission reflects Maldicore's public-interest commitment to resilient national development and supports the MMA's vision for adaptive, forward-looking policymaking.

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