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MARINE AQUACULTURE INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY IN THE MALDIVES



MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT & TRADE



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Marine Aquaculture Investment Opportunity in the Maldives

Pioneering Sustainable Seafood Production in One of the World's Most Pristine Marine Environments

The Government of Maldives invites private sector investors to participate in the development of commercial-scale marine aquaculture operations across a set of strategically identified Mariculture Zones throughout the country. With vast unspoiled lagoons, abundant marine biodiversity, and established export channels, the Maldives offers a unique opportunity to establish sustainable seafood production ventures in a globally recognised tourism and ocean economy.

This is a first-mover opportunity to build integrated aquaculture operations—including hatcheries, grow-out farms, and value-added processing facilities—across designated lagoon areas and associated islands.

Project Overview

Aquaculture is the fastest-growing food production sector globally, and the Maldives is positioning itself to lead marine aquaculture (mariculture) in the Indian Ocean region. Over 4,000 hectares of shallow and deep lagoons have been identified for sea cage and shallow water culture, with additional land designated for hatchery development.

The government has opened four dedicated Mariculture Zones with infrastructure potential and easy access to transportation links:

- Boduthiladhunmathi Zone (Haa Dhaalu Atoll)
- Meemu Zone
- Thaa Zone
- Raa Zone

Each zone offers pristine waters, available land or lagoon leaseholds, and logistical access to airports and domestic transport hubs.

Key Components

1. Commercial Mariculture Operations

- Hatcheries and nurseries for high-value native and whitelisted species
- Grow-out facilities using cages, rafts, or pens in lagoon or deep-sea settings
- Processing, packaging, and cold chain integration

2. Target Species for Cultivation

- Sea cucumbers, groupers, snappers, milkfish, and whitelisted shrimp species
- Seaweed (e.g. *Kappaphycus alvarezii*)
- Native bivalves and crustaceans

3. Site Advantages

- Access to lagoon areas ranging from 250 – 2,000+ hectares
- Nearby land plots or islands for hatchery and operations bases
- Proximity to domestic airports and inhabited islands for workforce and logistics

Why Invest in Mariculture in the Maldives?

- **Exclusive Natural Advantage:** Sheltered lagoons, clean ocean waters, and year-round tropical conditions
- **Export-Ready:** Existing linkages to international seafood markets and strong tourism demand
- **Flexible Species Freedom:** Native and approved non-native species allowed; import risk process in place for others
- **Low Entry Barriers:** No acquisition cost for leaseholds, with long-term tenure and minimal annual rent
- **Attractive Incentives:**
 - 50-year lease terms with first 3 years rent-free
 - Import duty exemptions on aquaculture-related inputs
 - 100% foreign ownership permitted

Next Steps

Investors are invited to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) and engage with the Ministry of Fisheries and Ocean Resources to discuss site availability, target species, lease terms, and technical feasibility. The Ministry will be issuing an official Call for Proposals for aquaculture investment opportunities, and interested parties are encouraged to apply once the call is announced. Submitting an EOI in the meantime will help initiate early engagement and facilitate alignment ahead of the formal process.

Contact:

Ministry of Fisheries and Ocean Resources
fids@fisheries.gov.mv

Technical Support

Maldives Marine Research Institute
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Investment Facilitation

Ministry of Economic Development and Trade
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