**RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS RAISED BY ETHICS COMMITTEE**

**Comment 1**

As the original feedback provided was prior to the Covid-19 emergency, please could you provide the details of any adjustments which are planned for the research as a result of Covid-19. For example, an updated timeframe, the use of PPE, any changes in access to participants, and any reassurances regarding safety measures which will be given to participants. Please include any relevant information regarding this to the study Information Sheet*,* and elsewhere as necessary.

**Response**

***An updated timeframe:***

Initially, I expected to complete the study within 3 years. However, due to Covid-19 emergency, data collection will be delayed till late October or early November. This can further be delayed, depending on the Covid-19 situation in the Maldives. Rough sea is a challenge for data collection. The data collection can be carried out in dry season that extends from late October to May. Seas can be very rough in rainy season. This usually extends from late May till mid-October.

Due to postponement in data collection, I expect to complete the study in 4 years’ time. The updated work plan is attached to the proposal.

***The use of PPE and any reassurances regarding safety measures which will be given to participants:***

Standardised precautions will be taken to ensure the safety of participants and field workers:

* Prior to interview, participants will have a telephone conversation with the fieldworker. Participants will be inquired if he/she is unwell, travelled overseas recently, or been in contact with anyone that is suspected to have, or has had Covid-19.
* Fieldworks will apply physical distancing of at least 1 meter at the time of interview.
* Field workers will wear masks at all times during interview.
* Participants will be advised to use face mask. Hand sanitiser will be provided in any case participant requests for it. These will be provided by the researcher.

***Any changes in access to participants:***

No. The Covid-19 emergency will not cause major issues in access to participants. It is expected people residing in urban area will travel to rural islands. This may not apply to rural islands where the research will be conducted. Also, public ferry between the islands run as normal. This is considered as an essential service. Therefore, transport will not be a problem in reaching the participants.

***Please include any relevant information regarding this to the study Information Sheet:***

I have included the safety precautions in information sheet.

**Comment 2**

Please note that after ethical approval from the UC HEC, the Committee will also require a copy of the approval from the Maldives once this has been received, to hold on file.

**Response**

Noted.