**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:***

The timing of data collection will depend on Covid-19 pandemic situation in the Maldives. The data collection can only 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.

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:***

Depending on the prevailing Covid-19 conditions in the Maldives, standardised precautions will be taken to ensure the safety of participants:

* Prior to the interview, researcher will have a telephone conversation with the participants. Participants will be asked if he/she is unwell, travelled overseas recently, or been in contact with anyone that is suspected to have, or has had Covid-19.
* At the time of face to face interview, the interviewer and the participant will be separated by a distance of 1 meter.
* Interviewer will wear face mask 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.