

BOATING INSIDER

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER BY NBAM

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MALDIVES DEEPENS TOURISM
TIES WITH RUSSIA

Welcome to the August edition of Boating Insider!

The August edition highlights NBAM’s continued efforts to support and strengthen the Maldives’ boating and marine tourism industry.

This month, the Association continued its engagement with government authorities, industry stakeholders, and members, while advancing preparations for the Maldives Boating Awards 2026 and following up on key issues affecting the boating sector.

This edition brings you the latest updates on NBAM’s activities, industry developments, member engagement, and ongoing initiatives aimed at strengthening, supporting, and promoting the Maldives’ boating industry.

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NATIONAL BOATING ASSOCIATION OF MALDIVES
G. Maavehi, 2nd Floor
Buruzu Magu, Male’ 20092
Maldives
Hotline +960 7970033
Email info@boating.mv
Web www.boating.mv

NBAM Management Team
Ismail Shareef, President
Eman Mohamed, Vice President
Ahmed Ibrahim, Treasurer
Zam’ath Zahir, Secretary General

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VMC Hosts Q3 Tourism Intelligence Briefing and Reveals Visit Maldives Year 2027 Theme

Visit Maldives Corporation (VMC) held the third edition of its Quarterly Insights: Maldives Tourism Intelligence Briefing 2026 on 13 August 2026 at Barceló Nasandhura Malé, bringing together tourism industry stakeholders, government representatives, policy-makers and members of the media to review the latest tourism intelligence and discuss priorities for the months ahead.

The briefing featured presentations on visitor behaviour, market developments and air connectivity, with insights from the Maldives Visitor Survey 2025 and an overview of current and future air connectivity provided by Maldives Airports Company Limited (MACL).

VMC also highlighted opportunities for greater industry participation in destination marketing and provided updates on its Q2 Action Plan, ongoing activities and feedback received from tourism industry stakeholders.

An interactive discussion on the Visit Maldives Year 2027 Action Plan explored key priorities, including diversifying the Maldives' tourism offering, strengthening sustainability, maintaining visitor

experience standards, promoting authentic and locally representative content, and increasing engagement with travel advisors. The potential for further development of the CIS, Central and Eastern European, and Nordic markets was also discussed.

A key highlight of the programme was the official reveal of "Islands Are Us", the theme for Visit Maldives Year 2027. Representatives from leading tourism industry associations, including the National Boating Association of Maldives (NBAM), joined VMC for the reveal, reflecting the collaborative approach being taken towards the national tourism campaign.

The session also provided an opportunity for industry stakeholders to exchange views and contribute to the ongoing development of the Visit Maldives Year 2027 Action Plan.

Through its Quarterly Insights platform, VMC continues to facilitate the sharing of tourism intelligence, industry feedback and market perspectives to support coordinated destination marketing and the continued development of the Maldives tourism sector.



VMC and MACL Partner for World Travel Awards 2026



Visit Maldives Corporation (VMC) has partnered with Maldives Airports Company Limited (MACL), with MACL serving as the Aviation Partner for the World Travel Awards (WTA) Asia, Oceania & Indian Ocean 2026.

The partnership agreement was signed by Aishath Shirany Nasir, Manager of Business Development at VMC, and Nashaya Abdul Wahid, General Manager of Air Service Development at MACL.

Under the partnership, MACL will support the event through branding and promotional visibility at Velana International Airport, providing an opportunity to showcase the World Travel Awards and the Maldives to international visitors arriving in the country.

The collaboration brings together key organisations from the tourism and aviation sectors in preparation for the prestigious regional ceremony. It also reflects a shared focus on strengthening coordination, enhancing the visitor experience, and promoting the Maldives to an international audience.

Commenting on the partnership, MACL highlighted its commitment to supporting the World Travel Awards and showcasing the Maldives to a global audience. As the Official Aviation Partner, MACL will contribute to creating a welcoming experience for visitors arriving through Velana International Airport while supporting the country's international tourism presence.

The World Travel Awards recognises excellence across the global travel and tourism industry, bringing together leading destinations, tourism organisations and hospitality brands. Hosting the Asia, Oceania & Indian Ocean 2026 ceremony in the Maldives is expected to provide opportunities for greater international exposure, industry networking and destination promotion.

The partnership forms part of VMC's ongoing efforts to host and support international tourism events that strengthen industry connections and showcase the Maldives on the global stage.



Mr. Abdulla Yasir Appointed CEO and Managing Director of Visit Maldives Corporation

Abdulla Yasir was appointed Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director (CEO & MD) of Visit Maldives Corporation (VMC) on 26 August 2026.

The appointment comes as VMC continues its efforts to strengthen the Maldives’ international tourism presence, expand destination marketing initiatives and support the continued development of the country’s tourism industry.

As the national destination marketing organisation, VMC plays a key role in promoting the Maldives across international markets and strengthening collaboration with tourism industry stakeholders.

The appointment of Yasir comes as VMC prepares for Visit Maldives Year 2027, including the implementation of destination marketing activities under the newly unveiled theme, “Islands Are Us.”

NBAM extends its best wishes to Mr Abdulla Yasir in his new role and looks forward to continued collaboration with VMC in support of the Maldives’ tourism and boating industry.



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MEMBERSHIP
BENEFITS

Ibrahim Shiuree Elected to PATA Executive Board



Ibrahim Shiuree has been elected to the Executive Board of the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA), expanding his leadership role within the organisation and providing an opportunity to contribute to discussions shaping tourism across the Asia-Pacific region.

Shiuree has served on the PATA Board since August 2025, contributing to governance discussions, strategic forums and industry dialogue. His election to the Executive Board represents an advancement from his previous Board role and provides greater involvement in the strategic direction and governance of the Association.

In his new role, Shiuree will contribute to regional tourism priorities, including strengthening collaboration between destinations, supporting innovation and digital transformation, and creating opportunities for emerging tourism leaders.

His continued involvement with PATA also provides an opportunity to bring the experience and perspectives of the Maldivian tourism industry into regional dialogue, while strengthening the Maldives' engagement with tourism boards, government agencies, travel businesses and other industry stakeholders across the Asia-Pacific region.

The role comes at a time when the Maldives continues to explore opportunities to diversify source markets, respond to changing traveller trends and strengthen its international tourism presence. Greater engagement with regional tourism networks can support knowledge-sharing, collaboration and the development of new industry partnerships.

Shiuree was appointed Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director and Board Director of Visit Maldives Corporation in June 2024 and subsequently served in the role until his departure from VMC.

NBAM extends its best wishes to Mr Ibrahim Shiuree in his continued work within PATA and the international tourism sector.

Maldivian Delegation Visits Russia to Strengthen Tourism and Air Connectivity

A high-level Maldivian delegation led by the Minister of Tourism and Civil Aviation, Honourable Mohamed Ameen, undertook an official visit to the Russian Federation from 17 to 21 August 2026, with engagements in Moscow and St. Petersburg focused on strengthening tourism cooperation, air connectivity and travel trade partnerships.

The delegation included senior representatives from the Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation, Visit Maldives Corporation (VMC), Maldives Airports Company Limited (MACL), Maldivian, and members of the tourism industry.

Russia remains one of the Maldives' key tourism markets. As of 12 August 2026, the Maldives had welcomed 192,453 Russian visitors, representing 14.7% of total tourist arrivals and making Russia the country's second-largest source market. In 2025, the Maldives recorded 278,761 arrivals from Russia.

During the visit, the delegation held discussions with Russian government representatives on tourism and civil aviation cooperation, air connectivity and opportunities to strengthen flight capacity between the two countries.

Meetings were also held with tour operators, travel trade partners, industry associations, digital platforms and hospitality companies in Moscow and St. Petersburg. The engagements provided opportunities to exchange market intelligence, understand evolving traveller preferences and explore promotional and commercial partnerships ahead of the upcoming travel season and Visit Maldives Year 2027.



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Industry networking events held in both cities brought together representatives of the Russian travel trade, tourism partners and media. The events highlighted the Maldives' tourism offering while strengthening relationships with partners contributing to travel demand from the Russian market.

The visit forms part of broader efforts to maintain the Maldives' strong presence in the Russian market while strengthening connectivity, market partnerships and destination visibility. The outcomes of the engagements are expected to contribute to future destination marketing activities and industry collaboration as the Maldives prepares for Visit Maldives Year 2027.



“Islands Are Us” Unveiled as Theme for Visit Maldives Year 2027



“Islands Are Us” has been unveiled as the official theme for Visit Maldives Year 2027, introducing a national campaign platform that brings together the people, culture, nature and experiences of the Maldives under one shared identity.

The theme was revealed during the Quarterly Insights – Maldives Tourism Intelligence Briefing: Q3 2026, organised by Visit Maldives Corporation (VMC) on 13 August 2026. Representatives from five major tourism industry associations — Maldives Association of Tourism Industry (MATI), National Hotels and Guesthouses Association of Maldives (NHGAM), National Boating Association of Maldives (NBAM), Maldives Association of Travel Agents and Tour Operators (MATATO), and Maldives Association of Yacht Agents (MAYA) — joined VMC for the official unveiling.

Built around the Maldives’ strong global association with its islands, “Islands Are Us” aims to broaden the way the destination is presented to international audiences. The campaign highlights how island life has shaped Maldivian communities, traditions, livelihoods, culture, hospitality and the country's relationship with the ocean.

The campaign will also showcase the diversity of experiences available across the Maldives, extending beyond the traditional sun, sand and sea image to highlight adventure, romance, family, culture, luxury, MICE, sustainability and wellness.

The campaign's visual identity is built around eight symbols inspired by Maldivian nature and culture, including the heron, pink rose, boxfish, Bodu Mas, parrotfish, conch shell, fiddler crab and whale shark. Each

symbol represents one of the campaign's eight core tourism segments.

The initiative is designed to support destination storytelling, international marketing campaigns, events, activations and industry partnerships throughout 2027, providing a unified platform that can be adopted across the tourism industry and communities.

The joint unveiling by the country's leading tourism associations reflects the collaborative approach behind Visit Maldives Year 2027, with “Islands Are Us” envisioned as a shared national platform for the Maldivian tourism industry.

The full branding and official logo for Visit Maldives Year 2027 are scheduled to be unveiled during the official National Tourism Day function on 3 October 2027.

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Centara Mirage Lagoon Maldives Hosts PADI Instructor Development Course



Against the backdrop of the Maldives' renowned marine environment, Centara Mirage Lagoon Maldives is supporting the development of the next generation of dive professionals as the exclusive Best Dives Maldives resort authorised to deliver the PADI Instructor Development Course (IDC).

The two-week programme brought together Divemasters from Best Dives Maldives operations across the country, reinforcing the resort's role as the group's dedicated training hub for professional dive education.

Designed for certified Divemasters, the programme combines classroom learning with practical teaching workshops, confined and open-water assessments, Emergency First Response Instructor Development and Scuba Dive Instructor training. Participants who meet PADI's prerequisites progress towards the Instructor Examination, the final step towards becoming a PADI Open Water Scuba Instructor.

Cluster General Manager Jorge Fernandez highlighted the resort's commitment to supporting the long-term development of the Maldives' diving industry through education, professional development and marine stewardship..

"Centara Mirage Lagoon Maldives has become the dedicated home of professional instructor development within the Best Dives Maldives network," said Shimal Mohamed, Base Leader, Best Dives Maldives at Centara Mirage Lagoon Maldives. "Hosting the PADI Instructor Development Course allows us not only to develop future dive professionals, but also to maintain consistent training standards across our operations." The programme also places emphasis on creating opportunities for Maldivians to pursue careers in the diving profession, supporting local talent and contributing to the continued growth of the sector.

With its protected lagoon, house reef and diverse marine ecosystem, Centara Mirage Lagoon Maldives provides an environment where candidates can gain practical teaching experience in conditions representative of real-world diving. Beyond certification, the programme aims to strengthen participants' knowledge, confidence and instructional skills.

As the exclusive PADI Instructor Development Course provider within the Best Dives Maldives portfolio, Centara Mirage Lagoon Maldives continues to contribute to professional dive education and the development of the Maldives as a leading international diving destination.



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Atmosphere Foundation Launches Second “Zero to Divemaster” Scholarship Batch



Atmosphere Foundation, the community and sustainability arm of Atmosphere Core, has launched the second batch of its “Zero to Divemaster” Scholarship Programme, providing young Maldivians with an opportunity to build professional careers in the country’s diving and tourism industries.

The new batch officially began training on 11 July 2026 following an inauguration ceremony held in Vilimale’. Delivered in partnership with Moodhu Bulhaa Dive Centre, the three-month programme is designed to take participants with no previous diving experience through professional training towards PADI Divemaster certification. Ten students were selected for the second batch, comprising five women and five men, following a competitive selection process that included professional interviews.



The scholarship covers course fees, training materials and PADI registration costs, while participants also receive accommodation, daily meals and dive insurance throughout the programme. This comprehensive support is intended to remove financial barriers and allow students to focus fully on their training.

The launch follows the graduation of the programme’s first batch, which was celebrated at a closing ceremony on 7 July 2026. Three graduates have already secured employment in the tourism industry, highlighting the programme’s potential to create meaningful career pathways for young Maldivians.

Speaking about the initiative, Abdul Azeez Abdul Hakeem of Atmosphere Foundation highlighted that the programme aims to develop not only technical diving skills but also qualities such as responsibility, confidence, punctuality and professionalism.

The continuation of the programme reflects Atmosphere Foundation’s focus on developing local talent and strengthening skills within the Maldivian diving industry. By providing young people with professional training and employment pathways, the initiative also contributes to the wider development of the country’s blue economy.

With the second batch now underway, the programme continues to demonstrate the role that targeted training and industry partnerships can play in building a stronger pool of local dive professionals for the Maldives.



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Insights from 07_2025-2027

BOARD MEETING

The National Boating Association of Maldives (NBAM) held its 7th Executive Board Meeting for the 2025–2027 term on 24 August 2026, with the Board reviewing updates on the Maldives Boating Awards 2026 and several key issues affecting the boating industry.

A major focus of the meeting was the Boating Awards 2026, with 24 nominations received from NBAM’s 47 members at the time of the meeting. Following the extension of the nomination deadline to 31 August, the Board encouraged members to participate and agreed on the need for more direct engagement with members to increase nominations. Discussions also continued on sponsorship and preparations for the awards ceremony.

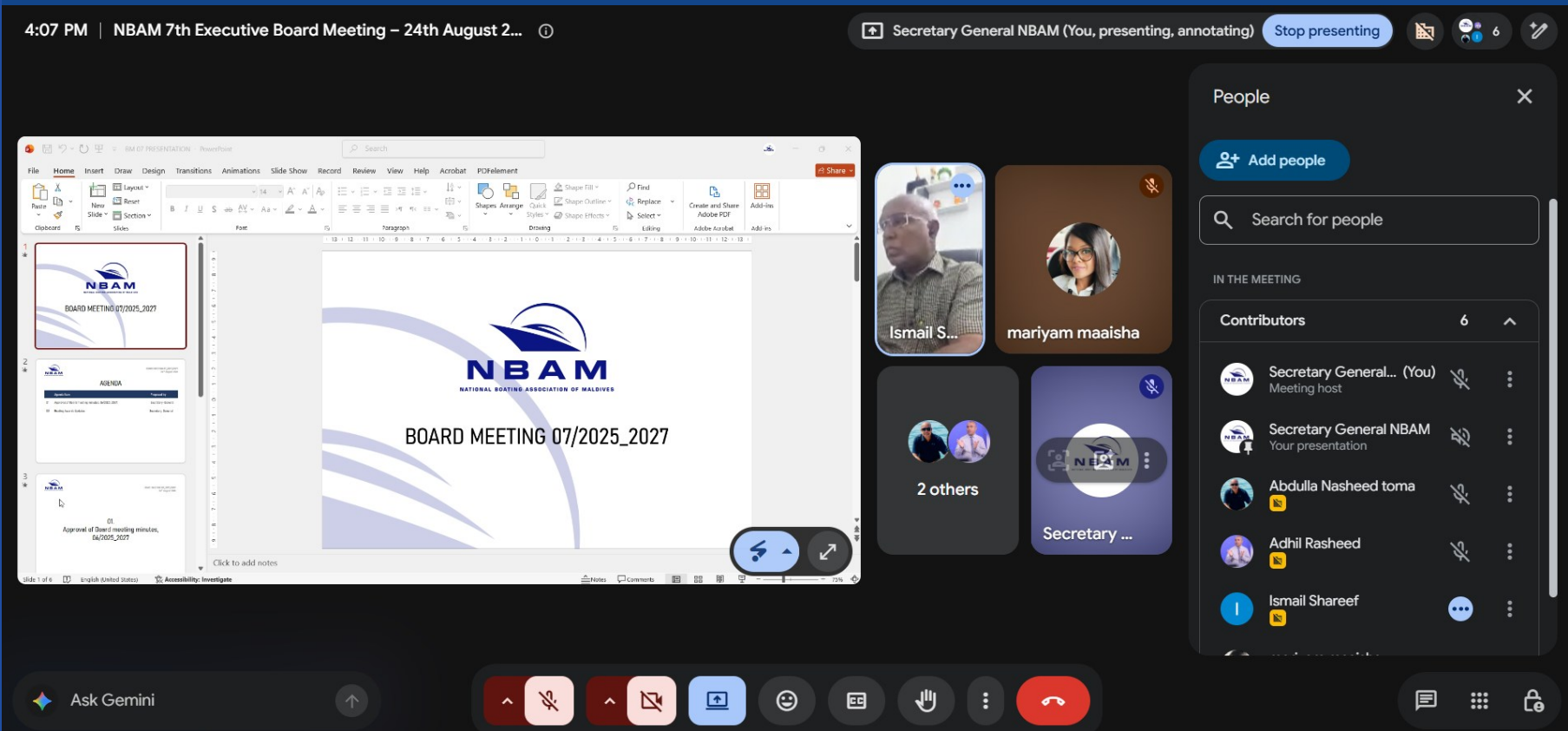
The Board also discussed concerns surrounding the propeller guard requirement for vessels operating within the SAMPA area. Members raised concerns regarding the practicality, cost and performance of some available solutions. NBAM will raise these concerns with the relevant authorities and seek further

consideration regarding the implementation timeline.

Another issue discussed was the cost of transporting surfboards and surf equipment on domestic flights. The Board agreed to seek clarification on the current charges and explore engagement with domestic airlines regarding the issue, which can have a direct impact on tourism and boating operators.

The Board also reviewed the ongoing Hulhumalé jetty situation, following damage to a jetty that has affected safari vessel operations. NBAM will continue its follow-up with the Hulhumalé Development Corporation (HDC) regarding repairs, possible temporary arrangements and the previously discussed allocation of space for approximately 80 safari vessels.

Through these discussions, NBAM continues to advocate for practical solutions to operational challenges and to strengthen engagement with relevant authorities on issues affecting the Maldives’ boating industry.



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