



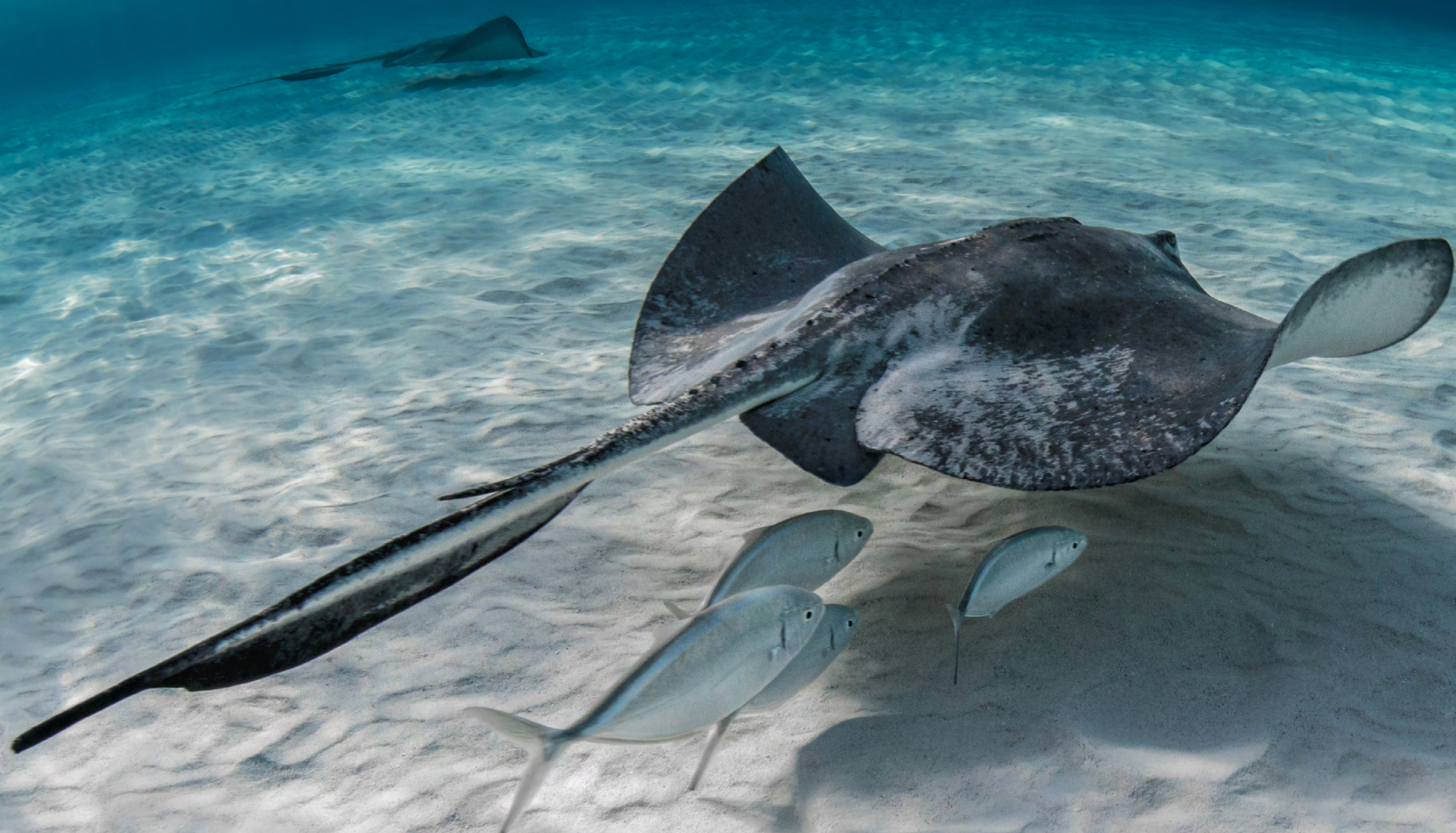
VELAA

PRIVATE ISLAND
MALDIVES

Sustainability Report

2024

1st QUARTER



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ABBREVIATIONS

CSR - Corporate Social Responsibility
NGO - Non-Governmental Organization
WDC - Women Development committee
EMP - Environmental Management Plan



Executive summary

The sustainability report for Velaa Private Island highlights our commitment to environmental and social responsibility. We have implemented various initiatives to reduce our ecological impact, including energy-efficient practices, waste reduction strategies, and community engagement projects. This report showcases our achievements, challenges, and future goals in promoting sustainability. Through transparent communication, we aim to inspire guests, employees, and stakeholders to join us in creating a more sustainable and eco-friendly resort experience.

Velaa pledge to sustainability

Velaa Private Island's Sustainability, Quality & Energy sufficiency Policy

Velaa Private Island is one of the leading Five Star resorts in the Maldives, providing high standard services and private moments to make memorable experience for our guests. Located in Noonu Atoll, in the North of Maldives, our 47 villa resort offers a greenery landscape and a large number of facilities to ensure our guests meaningful stay.

Velaa Private Island is dedicated to sustainability, and is committed to environmentally conscious practices aimed at reducing its carbon footprint, minimising waste, and supporting eco-friendly initiatives. Through meticulous data collection, including energy production and consumption, waste treatment and coral reef surveys, we have established benchmarks and aim to implement sustainable practices to mitigate our impact on the island's ecosystem.

Our commitment extends to raising awareness among the local communities and among colleagues. Providing training for staff members, awareness for our guests and education of young generations, is one of the resort priorities.

We incorporate sustainability in the resort by hiring locals, purchasing locally sourced products as much as we can and embracing fair trading practices, contributing to community development and ethical business practices.

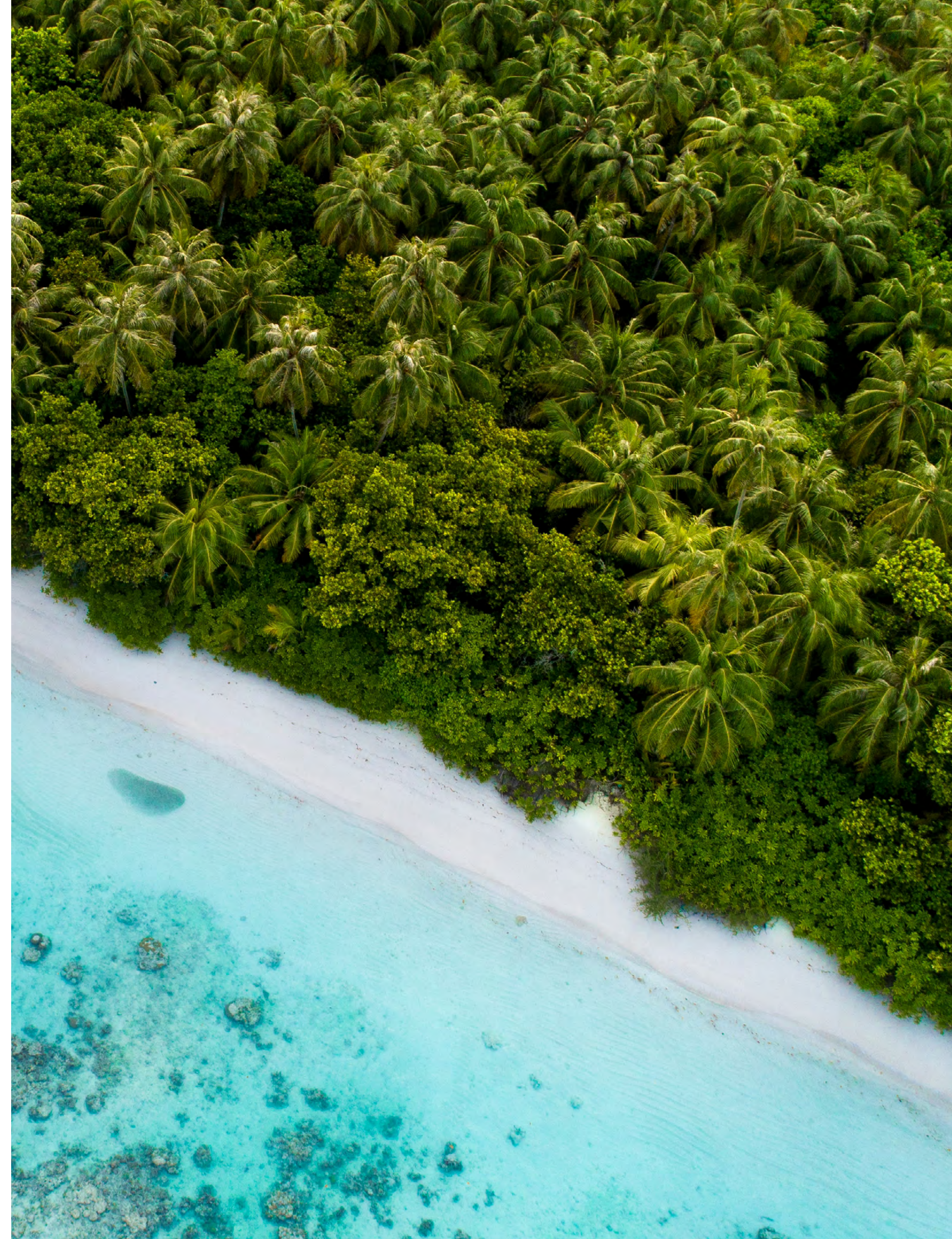
The Velaa Coral Restoration Project underscores our dedication to preserving the natural coral reef ecosystem. We are investing in innovative techniques to protect marine life and combat threats posed by climate change and plastic pollution. Our sustainable restoration methods, in accordance with the Environment Management Plan and approved by the Maldivian government, aim to ensure the long-term health and vitality of the island's coral reefs.

We invite guests, staff, local community, and partners to embark on its journey towards a sustainable future. By working together, we can create a positive change and ensure a greener, more resilient planet for generations to come.


Wayne Milgate
General Manager
Velaa Private Island Maldives



V2024.01. Approved 25.02.2024





Overview of 2024 First Quarter

To have a greater understanding of the picture of Velaa Private Island and the trends which are occurring in sustainability, it is important to recognise the activity that took place during 2024 First Quarter. Below is a table of the patterns and trends seen over the first quarter with respect to obvious events.

JANUARY	Earth Check enrollment
FEBRUARY	Fehikuramaa Third year session - Composting Closing Ceremony
MARCH	Digitalisation of guest check-in paperwork

DIGITALISATION OF GUEST CHECK-IN PAPERWORK

10,000 A4 PAPER SAVED ANNUALLY	500 CORALS TRANSPLANTED ON BIOROCK	650 REFILL WATER BOTTLES DISTRIBUTED TO VELAA TEAM MEMBERS
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Fehikuramaa Initiative

By engaging in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities, businesses contribute to the well-being of communities, environmental sustainability and overall societal advancement. Fehikuramaa initiative started in 2021 with the aim of helping the 13 local islands in Noonu Atoll on their way to sustainable practices. Resorts would not exist without the help of the local communities that is the reason why Velaa owner, Mr. Smejck, decided to focus the CSR Programme on Noonu Atoll, providing equal care between the 13 islands. After waste management and plastic pollution sessions, this third year programme was focusing on one of the major environmental issues in the Maldives, the food waste.





THIRD YEAR SESSION - CLOSING CEREMONY

The Fehikuramaa team embarked on the second half of the programme's third year, conducting compost awareness and workshop sessions across all the local islands in Noonu Atoll. Velaa management participated in the closing ceremony held in Holhudhoo, witnessing the impact of the Fehikuramaa initiative on local communities over the past three years. Notably, the school's environmental club staged a drama depicting the challenges faced in the Maldives and the positive changes towards sustainable practices implemented by Noonu islands since the commencement of Velaa's CSR programme. These changes include a reduction in plastic bottle usage, improvements in waste segregation, and the implementation of solutions to address food waste previously disposed of in the ocean.



COMMUNITY NETWORK

The Fehikuramaa initiative is centred around forging connections between the communities and the resort. We have established a group comprising council members, school principals, and the Velaa CSR team, fostering mutual support and collaboration. This network promotes sustainable practices, cultivating a sense of unity and pride among both residents and the resort. Since its inception in February, we have witnessed several positive changes within the communities, including the organisation of school projects, participation in Parley for improved plastic waste disposal, and the sharing of concerns and queries that can benefit all 13 islands of Noonu Atoll.



COMPOST SCHOOL PROJECT

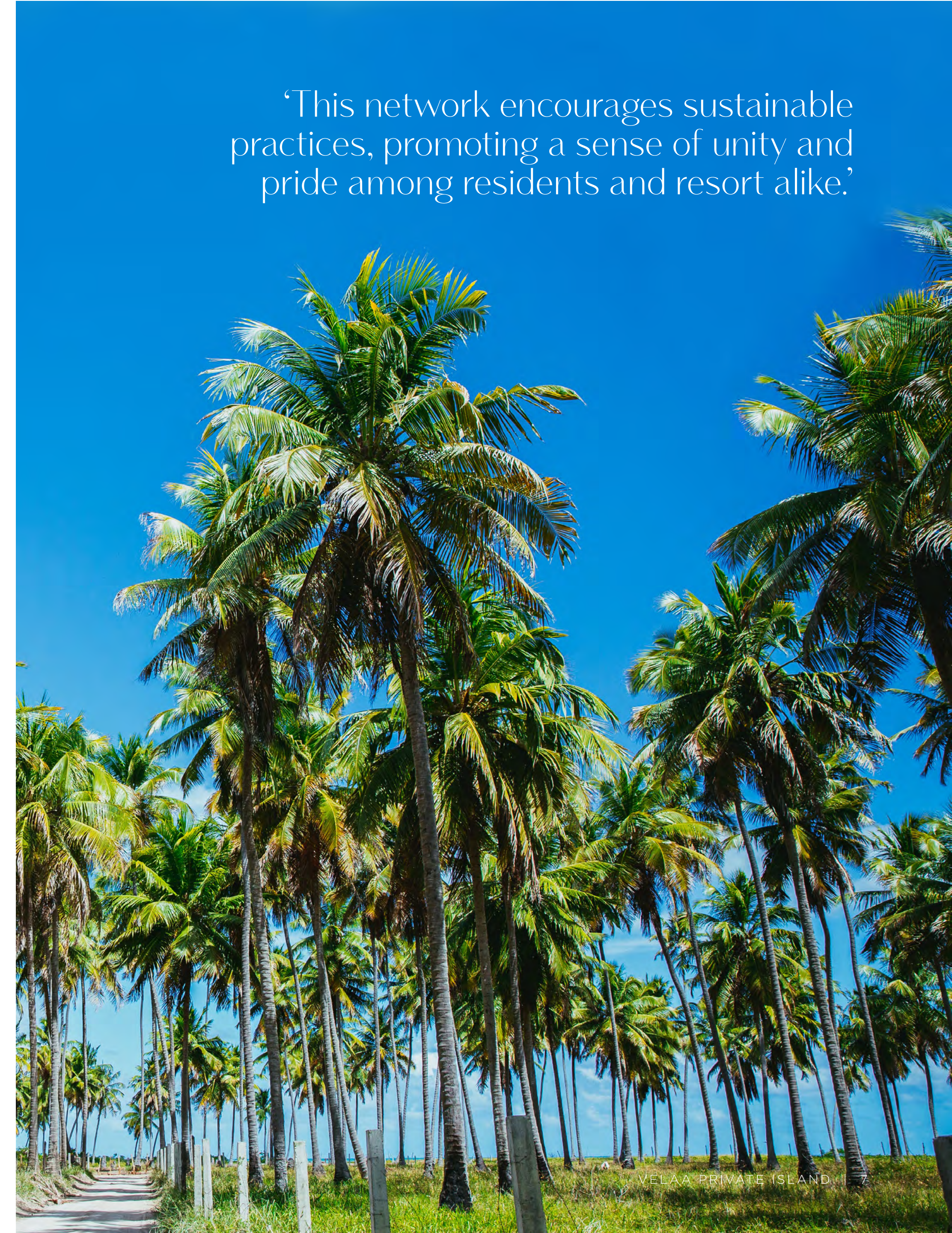


COMMUNITY COMPOST



PLASTIC BOTTLES SEGREGATED AND SENT TO PARLEY

‘This network encourages sustainable practices, promoting a sense of unity and pride among residents and resort alike.’



‘Even if they are biodegradable, coconut husks take up a lot of space in waste management center due to the time needed to decompose.’



DONATION

Donations extend beyond financial contributions; they encompass the valuable gifts of time, manpower, and expertise. Whether volunteering in community initiatives such as island cleaning, offering skills to a cause, or simply providing support, every form of donation has a meaningful impact on shaping a greener future. Velaa’s skilled engineering team assisted in repairing the coconut shredder on Kudafaree island, which had been broken and unused for over 18 months. Although coconut husks are biodegradable, they occupy significant space in waste management centres due to the time required for decomposition. Shredders are vital tools for managing green waste on local islands and improving the efficiency of community composting processes.



BROKEN COCONUT SHREDDER, RUSTED AND NOT USED FOR 18 MONTHS

COCONUT SHREDDER FIXED

Coral Restoration Project

The coral restoration project commenced in 2016 with the objective of assisting Velaa's coral reef in recovering from the damage inflicted by human activities and coral bleaching incidents. Climate change, pollution, and overfishing pose significant threats to marine life, such as the rising sea temperatures which act as stressors for coral growth and survival. When environmental conditions are unfavourable, such as sea temperatures exceeding 30°C, corals become stressed and begin bleaching, which can ultimately lead to coral mortality if sustained. To bolster coral resilience and enhance resistance to bleaching, the Velaa Coral Project employs various methods of coral reef restoration.



CORAL TRANSPLANTATION

To address the declining health of coral reefs, coral restoration projects emerged offering promising conservation strategy. The primary goal of Velaa Project is to restore and enhance coral population around the island by working with resilient coral species.

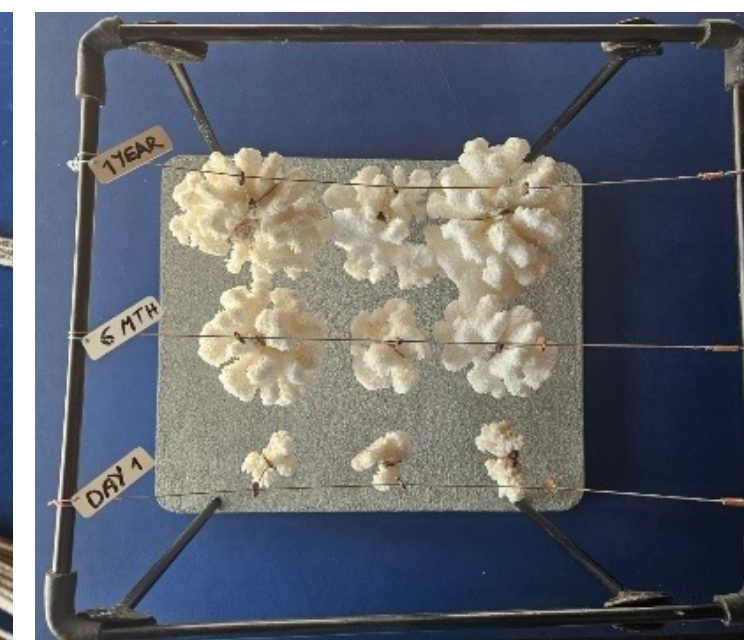
CORAL NURSERIES - SUSTAINABLE ROPES

We began implementing new types of ropes on our coral nurseries, which are cost-efficient, have a longer lifespan, and are stronger and more sustainable. We've replaced the nylon ropes and fishing lines previously used to attach corals to the nursery with stainless steel ropes of various diameters. We're crafting crimps, used to secure the rope around the corals, with copper rods, thereby reducing our carbon footprint by not having to import them from abroad.

Beyond their sustainability benefits, stainless steel ropes are easier and quicker to clean, reducing the time and manpower required for nursery maintenance. We anticipate that these newly designed ropes will have a longer lifespan than nylon, which needed replacement every year after coral transplantation. The project is expected to expand more rapidly with these new ropes designed by our Coral Restoration intern.



COPPER ROD AND STAINLESS STEEL ROPES



CORAL NURSERY MODEL



ACROPORA CORAL NURSERY WITH NEW ROPES

CORAL NURSERIES - SOFT CORALS TRANSPLANTATION

Soft corals play a vital role in a healthy coral reef ecosystem, attracting various marine life by offering habitat and a source of nourishment. However, cultivating soft corals poses challenges as they lack a calcium carbonate skeleton like hard corals. We've devised a method that eliminates the need for an ex-situ phase, which often exacerbates the stress on the corals during transplantation.

After spending two weeks in the nursery, allowing them time to self-attach to a ceramic support, the plug is directly transplanted onto the natural substrate. They will then expand their tissue over the ceramic plug, extending until reaching the fission point, which will yield a second individual.

CORAL ADOPTION

Our guests can support the Coral Restoration project by taking part in our Coral Adoption Programme. In the first quarter of 2024, four families participated in Coral Adoption, resulting in an additional 50 corals to be transplanted this year. For special events and private moments, we are crafting personalised frames such as heart-shaped structures, which can be directly attached to Biorock® for faster coral growth and increased resistance to disturbance.



SOFT CORAL TRANSPLANTATION



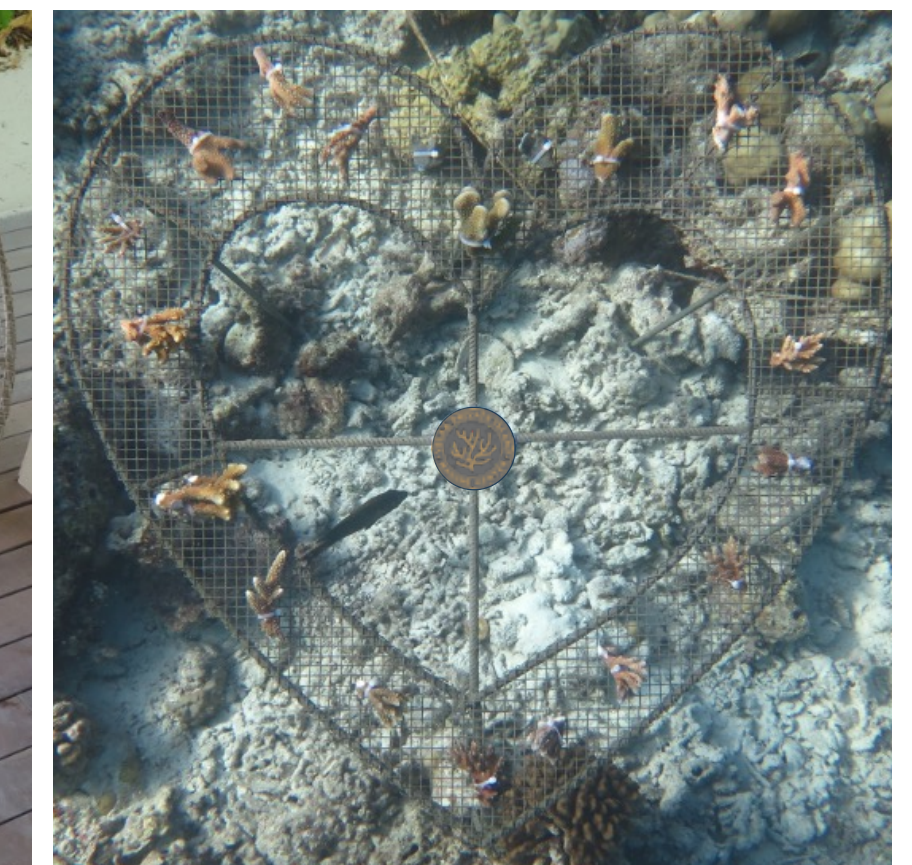
FISSION, GIVING TWO INDIVIDUALS



SOFT CORALS GROWING ON THE REEF



HEART SHAPE FRAME DESIGNED FOR ADOPTION



FRAME FILLED WITH CORALS AND CONNECTED TO BIOROCK®

BIOROCK® NEW FRAME

Biorock® is an electrical reef regeneration technology that produces natural building materials in the sea via safe extremely low voltage currents. The slow trickle charge makes corals more resistant to stress and accelerates the growth, settlement, and survival, of all marine organisms, increasing the biodiversity of the reef as well as protecting it from future bleaching. As part of Velaa's coral reef restoration programme, the initiative will have benefits for generations to come, both beneath and above the surface.



LOW VOLTAGE CURRENT CONNECTION

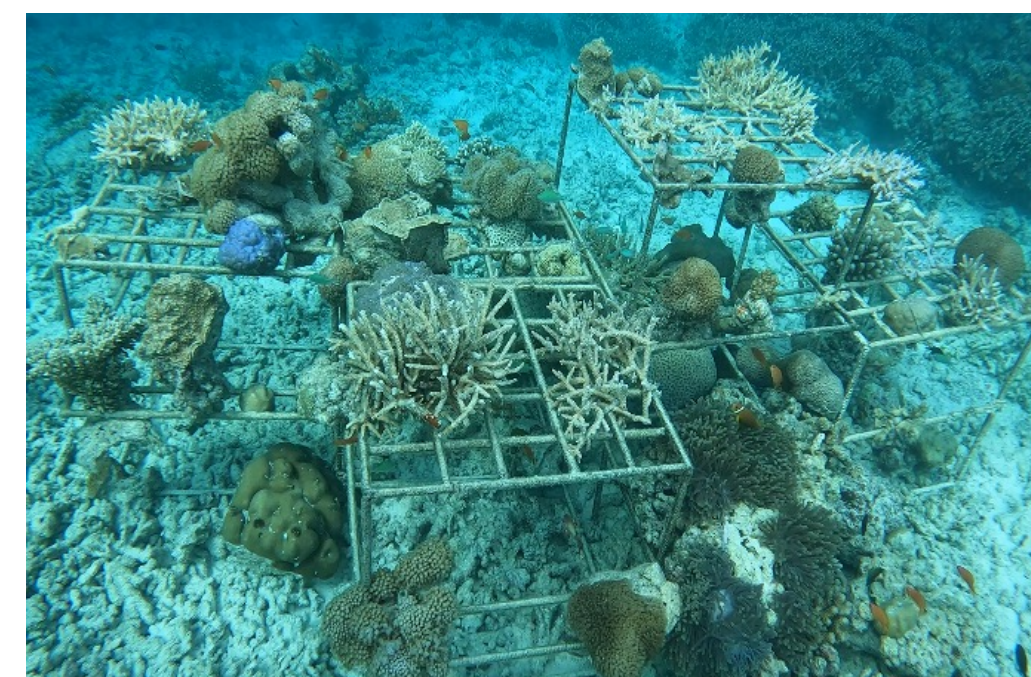


GROWTH AND SURVIVAL RATE UP TO 10 TIMES HIGHER THAN NATURAL REEF

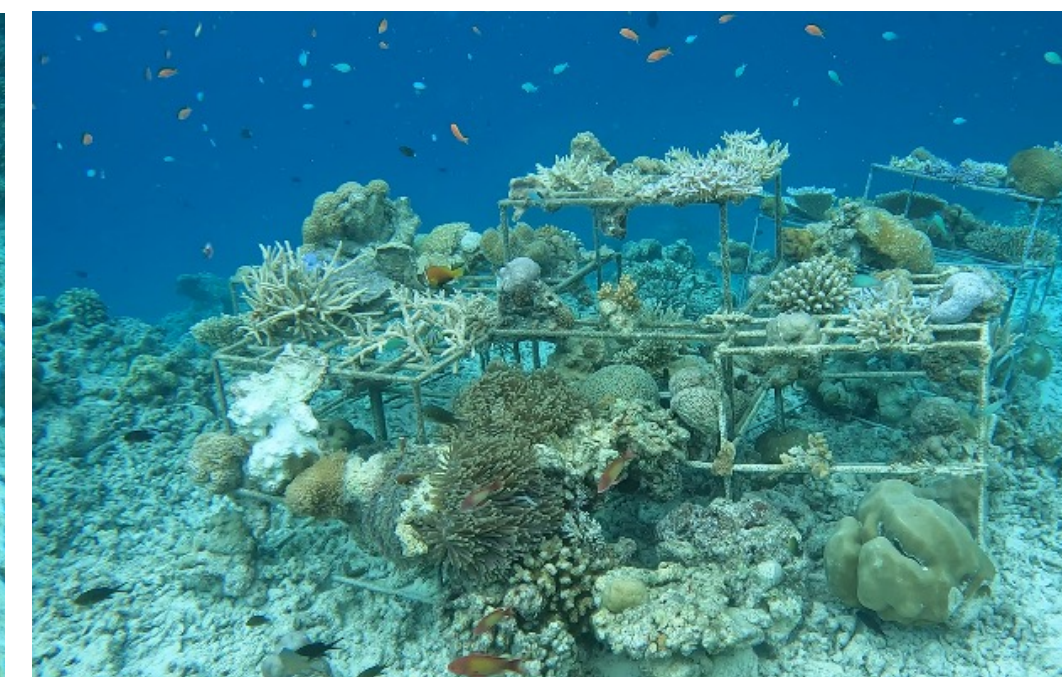
We deployed our sixth structure, The Cubes, on 15th January 2024. The new design on this structure is made in a way that we can interlock, as many as needed of small 0.5m² cubes, allowing us to follow the topography of the reef. It also creates complexity to the reef, which is necessary to increase the diversity of marine life visiting the frame.



DEPLOYMENT DAY, CURRENT CONNECTION



DAY 35



STRUCTURE EXTENSION



DAY 70

Sustainability Practices in the resort

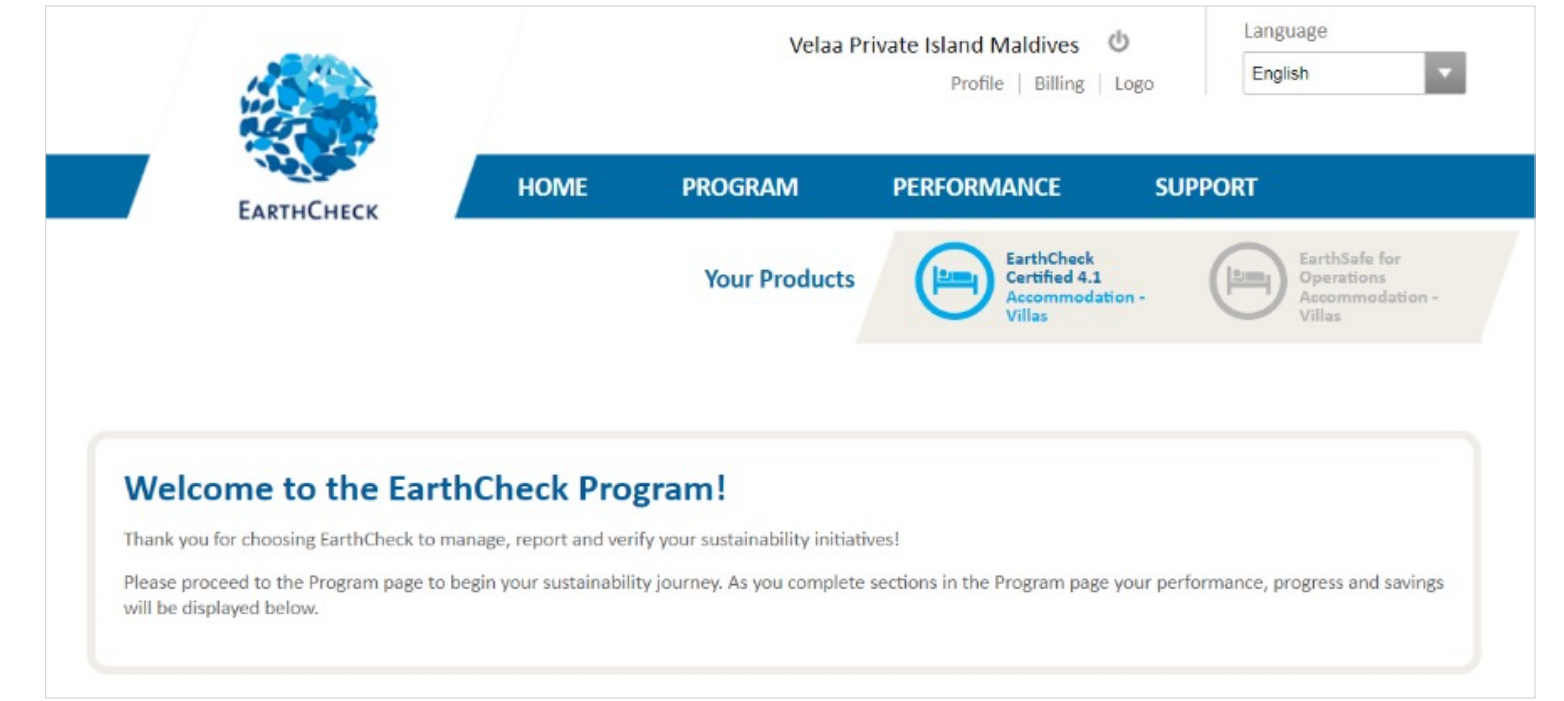
Velaa created a sustainability committee to implement eco-friendly practices and initiatives to minimise the environmental impact of the resort's operation. The team will focus on various aspects such as waste management, energy conservation, water efficiency, sustainable sourcing of materials and promoting educational events for colleagues. Ultimately, the committee will strive to balance environmental responsibility with the resort's operational needs, creating a more sustainable and enjoyable environment for guests and team members while preserving the natural beauty of the island.



EARTH CHECK

Joining the EarthCheck programme demonstrates Velaa’s commitment to providing a sustainable travel experience for our guests. It assures our clients and stakeholders that we are continuously striving to enhance eco-friendly practices, reduce our carbon footprint, and safeguard the natural environment. Furthermore, it enables us to benchmark our performance against other businesses in the market and align with international standards.

Since Velaa became part of EarthCheck, we have witnessed numerous positive changes within the resort, including the adoption of good practices among colleagues and a shared motivation to collaborate on developing innovative solutions. The sense of unity is strengthened by a collective goal to demonstrate leadership in climate action within the travel industry.



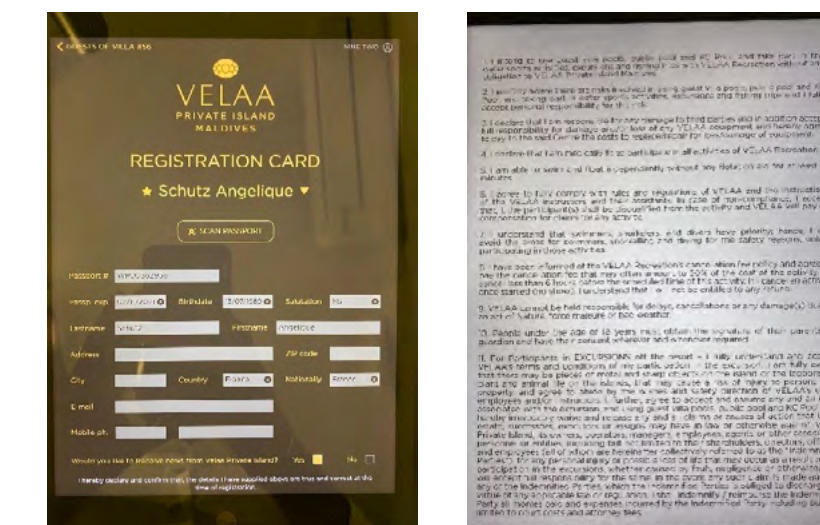
REFILL WATER BOTTLE

After installing the Best Water Technology (BWT) purificator systems in the back of the house, Velaa opted to supply each staff member with a 1L refill water bottle. Human resources have distributed 650 bottles, each personalised with colleagues’ names, ensuring everyone has convenient and continuous access to healthy water. Additionally, this initiative plays a significant role in reducing the reliance on single-use plastic bottles at the resort, marking a stride towards achieving zero-plastic status.



PAPERWORK DIGITALISATION

The front office has begun utilising electronic paperwork for guest registrations, resulting in savings of up to 10,000 papers per year. By shifting to digital documents, Velaa can streamline processes, reduce printing costs, and minimise waste. Furthermore, digital storage facilitates easier access to information while also promoting environmental sustainability by diminishing reliance on paper.



Scope for 2024 – 2nd Quarter

We aim to further our commitment to sustainability by organising an event to raise awareness about plastic pollution during Earth Day 2024, themed “Planet vs. Plastics”. On April 22nd, EARTHDAY.ORG stands firm in our dedication to ending plastics for the betterment of human and planetary health, advocating for a 60% reduction in the production of all plastics by 2040.

In our fourth year at Fehikuramaa, we will focus on Homemade/Handmade practices to decrease packaging waste and the emissions associated with commercial products’ transportation. Velaa will curate the upcoming session, sourcing the finest workshops and giveaways to encourage local communities to embrace locally produced goods, leading to more environmentally friendly choices. The session’s slogan will be “Small Individual Actions Can Have a Big Impact.”

World Sea Turtle Day is commemorated annually on June 16th to raise awareness about the challenges faced by sea turtles. Each year, tons of plastic are discarded into the ocean, posing a threat to sea turtles already in jeopardy. Velaa will join the movement, participating in events and raising awareness to aid in the preservation of sea turtles from extinction.

Our landscape team is currently cultivating aromatic plants in the Velaa nursery, which are used by our kitchen to craft flavourful dishes for our guests and colleagues. This practice not only promotes healthier eating with fresh, locally sourced ingredients free from chemicals but also reduces our carbon footprint associated with transportation and packaging.






Fehikuramaa
MALDIVES