



Implementing the Strategic Action Programme for THE SOUTH CHINA SEA AND GULF OF THAILAND (SCS SAP) Project

**Third Meeting of the Regional Project Steering Committee (PSC)
of the SCS SAP Project**
7-8 May 2025, Manila, Philippines

Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) and Strategic Action Programme (SAP) Development and Progress

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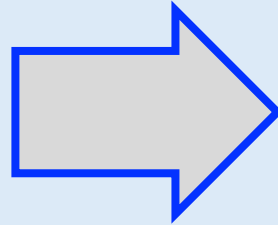
Presentation Outline

1. **What is the TDA-SAP process?**
2. **What is a transboundary environmental problem?**
3. **What was achieved by TDA-SAP 1.0?**
4. **Why do a TDA-SAP 2.0?**
 1. **TDA 2.0 Components**
 2. **System States to Risks**
5. **Process of doing a TDA-SAP**
6. **Workplan 2025-2026**
7. **Progress**
8. **Suggested PSC Actions**

What is a **TDA-SAP** process?

TDA

*Transboundary
Diagnostic Analysis
(National, Regional)*



SAP

*Negotiated policy
Document
(National, Regional)*

ENDORSED BY MINISTERS

- Identify transboundary (TB) environmental problems
- Examine impacts & consequences
- Analyse immediate, underlying and root causes of each TB problem

- Identify actions which can potentially yield global benefits; vs actions with purely national benefits
- Prioritize those that can address root causes

What is a **transboundary** environmental problem?

Spatial scale = 2 or more countries; regional; global

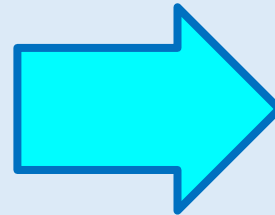
- **Migratory species** (turtles, marine mammals, fish)
- **Shared areas with important species or resources** (e.g. aquifers, lakes & rivers)
- **Areas whose environmental status have transboundary consequences**, even if inside a single country's jurisdiction
- **Risks or threats that may cross national boundaries**
- **Of global significance** – species, ecosystems and nutrients providing regional or global ecological goods and services
- **Shared national concerns that have regional or global significance**



TDA – SAP 1.0

TDA *Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (National, Regional)*

- 1997-1999
- Country reports by 7 National Committees
- Ranked environmental issues: (1) Habitat loss & modification; (2) Fisheries overexploitation in the GOT; (3) Land-based pollution; (4) Short supply and degraded quality of freshwater



SAP *Negotiated policy Document (National, Regional)*

ENDORSED BY MINISTERS

- 1998-2000: SAP accepted by COBSEA IGM13
- Basis for GEF South China Sea Project “Reversing Environmental Degradation Trends in the SCS and GOT”, 2002-2008
- Addressed 3 major issues identified by TDA
- SAP endorsed in 2008



Implementing the Strategic Action Programme for the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand (SCS SAP Project)

The TDA-SAP in the context
of the current SCS SAP Project...





Implementing the Strategic Action Programme for the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand (SCS SAP Project)

Component 1. Reducing habitat degradation and loss via national and local reforms to achieve Strategic Action Programme targets for coastal habitat management in the South China Sea

Component 2. Strengthening knowledge-based action planning for the management of coastal habitats and land-based pollution to reduce environmental degradation of the South China Sea.

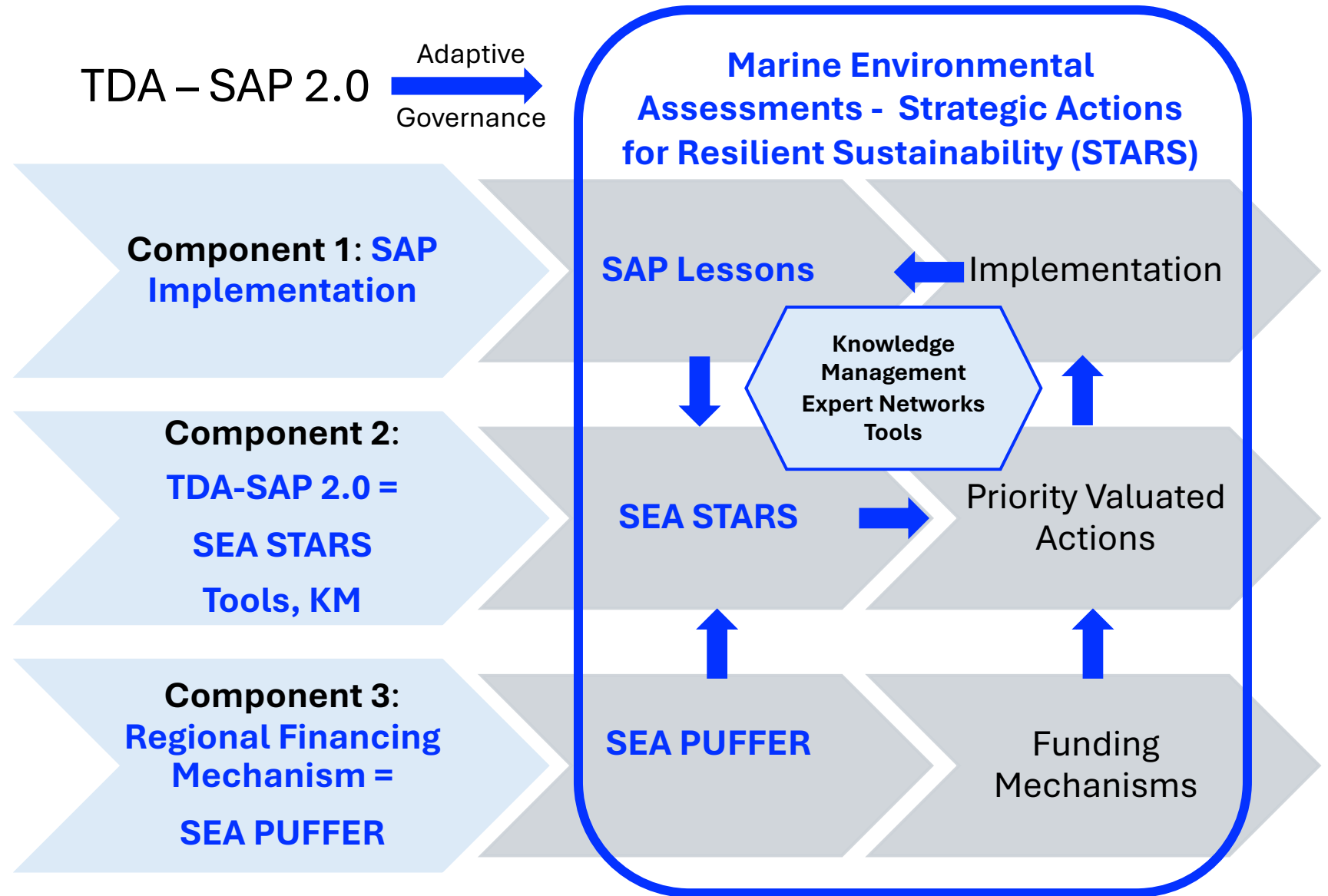
Component 3 Facilitating regional and national level integration and cooperation for implementation of the South China Sea Strategic Action Programme



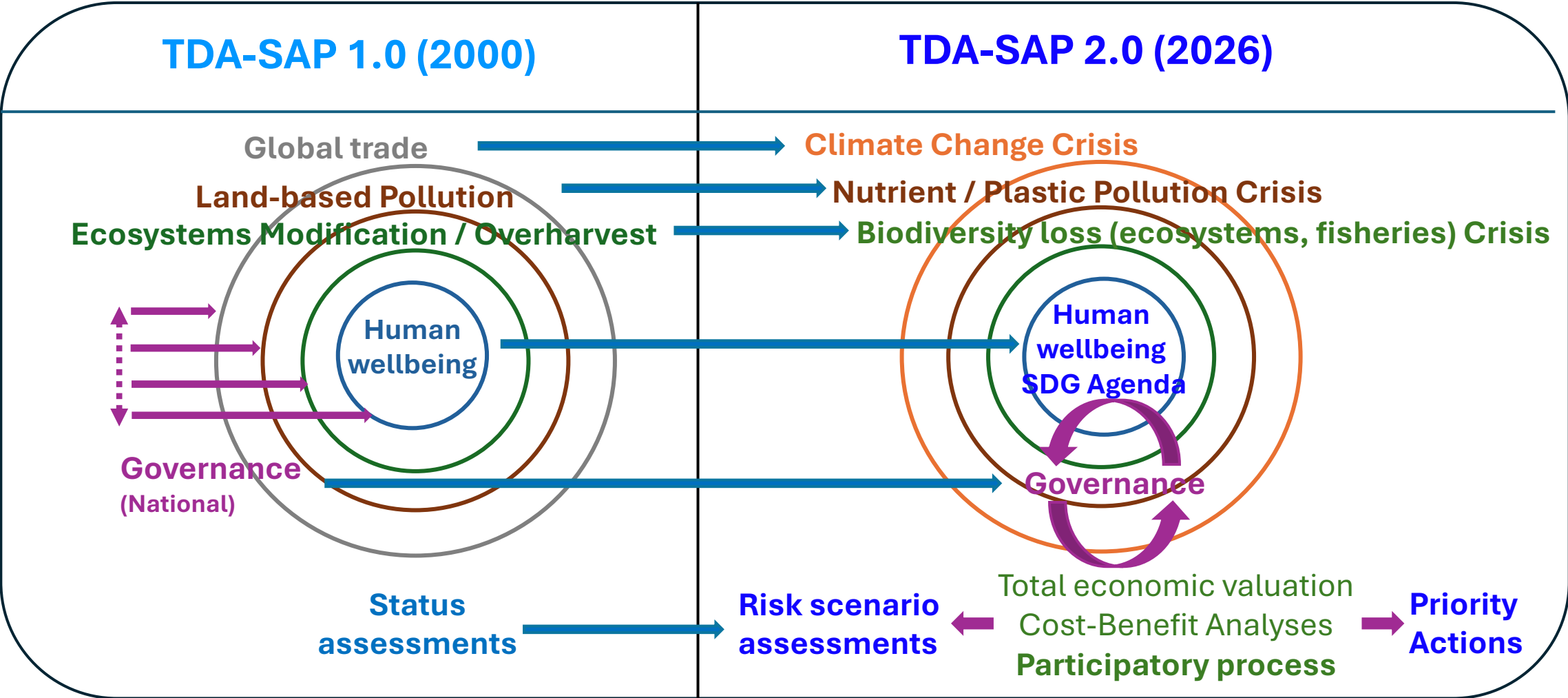
Outcome 2.6 Updated and Ministerially adopted Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) and Strategic Action Programme (SAP), including prioritization of national management actions to address climate variability and change

Baselines	Targets	Indicators
<p>TDA for SCS published in 2000</p> <p>Special Issue of Ocean and Coastal Management on South China Sea published in 2013</p>	<p>2.6.1 National and regional level consensus on contemporary issues and problems, including the quantification of environmental compromises and the prioritization of problems (Yr 2)</p>	<p>Status of national and regional level consensus on contemporary issues of transboundary significance with respect to coastal habitat and land-based pollution management</p>
<p>Strategic Action Programme endorsed in 2008 outlines priorities for management</p> <p>Established methodology for cost of action versus non-action in the context of SCS SAP implementation</p>	<p>2.6.2 The immediate and ultimate root causes of the problems are identified and consensus reached on priorities for intervention, including comparative analysis of the net benefits of alternative options (Yr 3)</p>	<p>Status of national and regional level consensus reached on priority actions for intervention</p> <p>Status of cost benefit analysis of comparative net benefits of alternative options for management</p>
<p>Strategic Action Programme for the South China Sea endorsed inter-governmentally in 2008</p>	<p>2.6.3 National and regional consultative process to develop updated Strategic Action Programme SAP for adoption by appropriate Ministers (Yr 5)</p>	<p>Status of /adoption by appropriate Ministers of an updated Strategic Action Programme for the South China Sea</p>
<p>Evolving understanding of sea level rise, climate change, and episodic events in East Asia but not applied in context of transboundary planning in the South China Sea</p>	<p>2.6.4 Prioritization of national management actions to address climate variability and change for incorporation into national policies and plans</p>	<p>Level up demonstrable use of the regional review on sea level rise, climate change, and episodic events in SAP formulation</p>

Identifying Key Component Deliverables
[SCS SAP Project Retreat, October 2024]

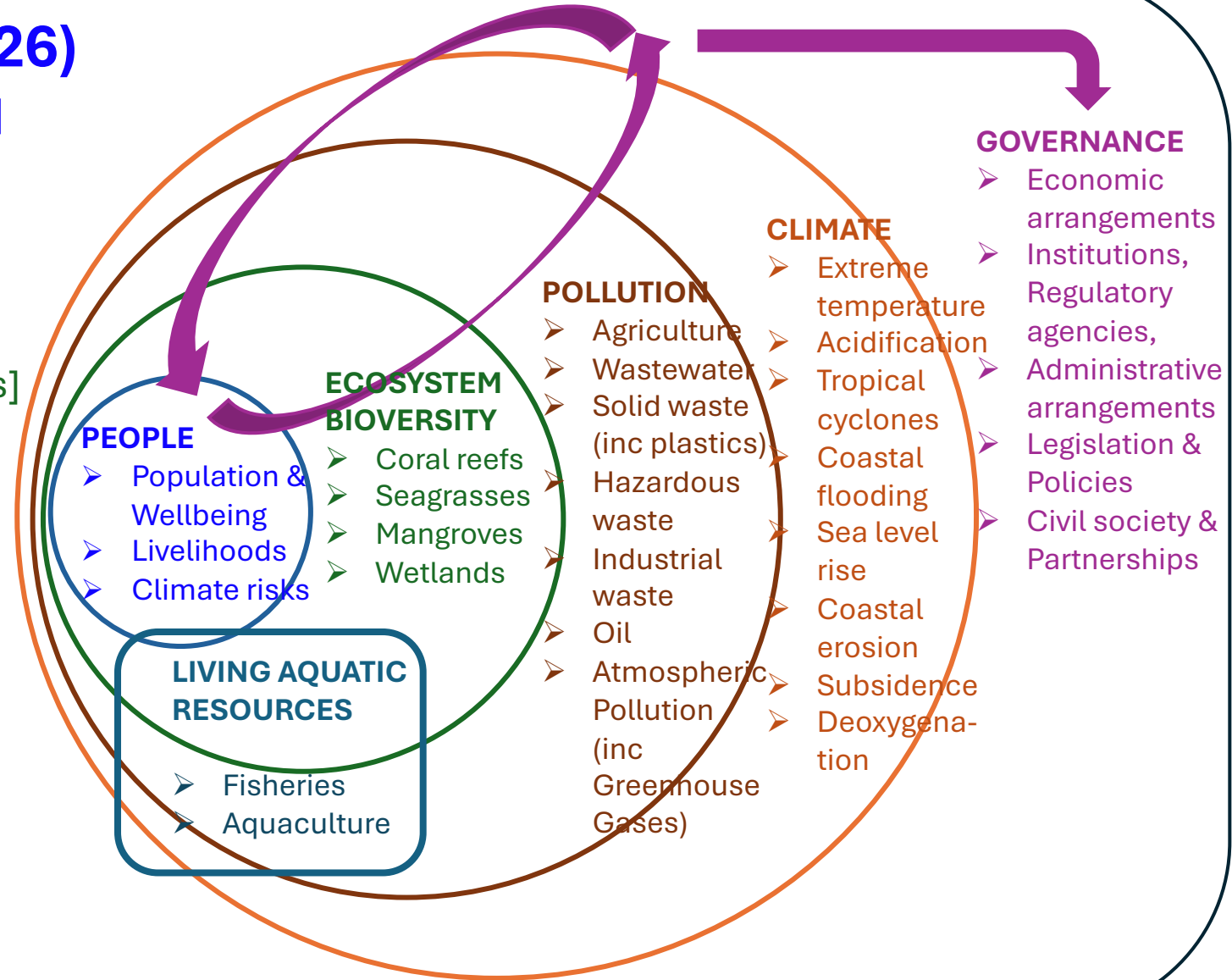
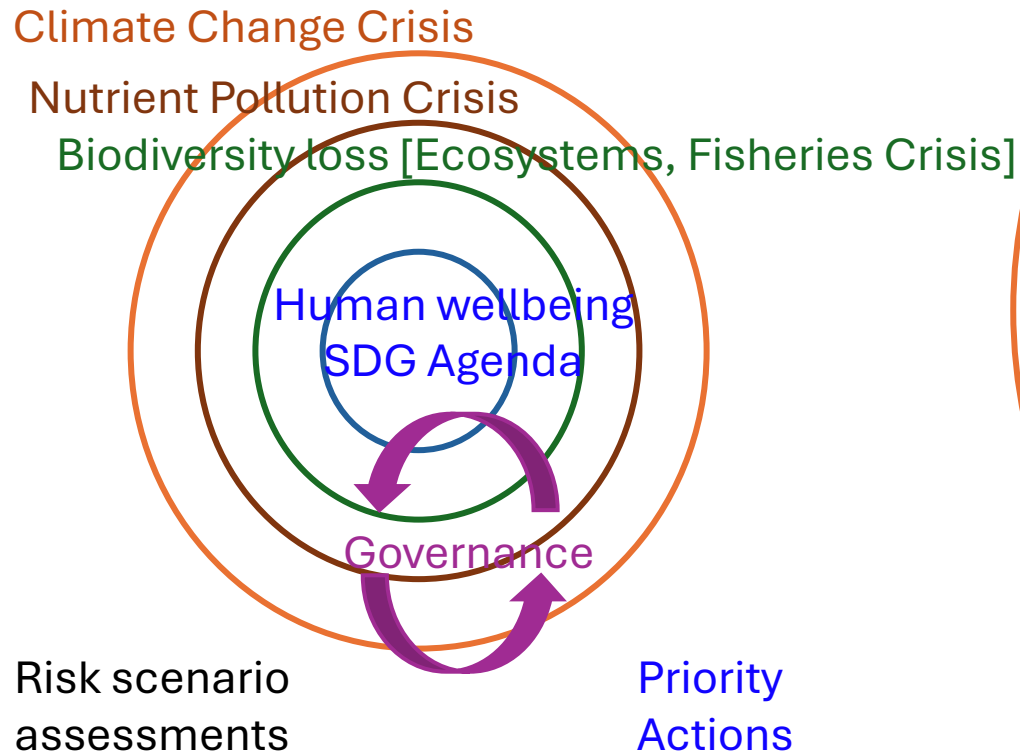


TDA-SAP Update (National, LME scales): From Status to Risk Scenario Assessments



TDA-SAP 2.0 (2026)

Indicator-based Assessment



Providing quantitative risk assessments at national and LME scales

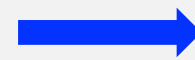
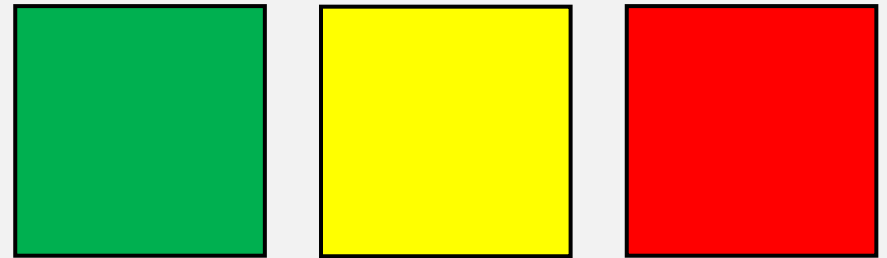
Quantitative Indicators

Directional Indicator =
Good (Low risk) → Bad (High risk)

Well-being/ Governance / Ecosystem
States/ Impacts/ Pressures

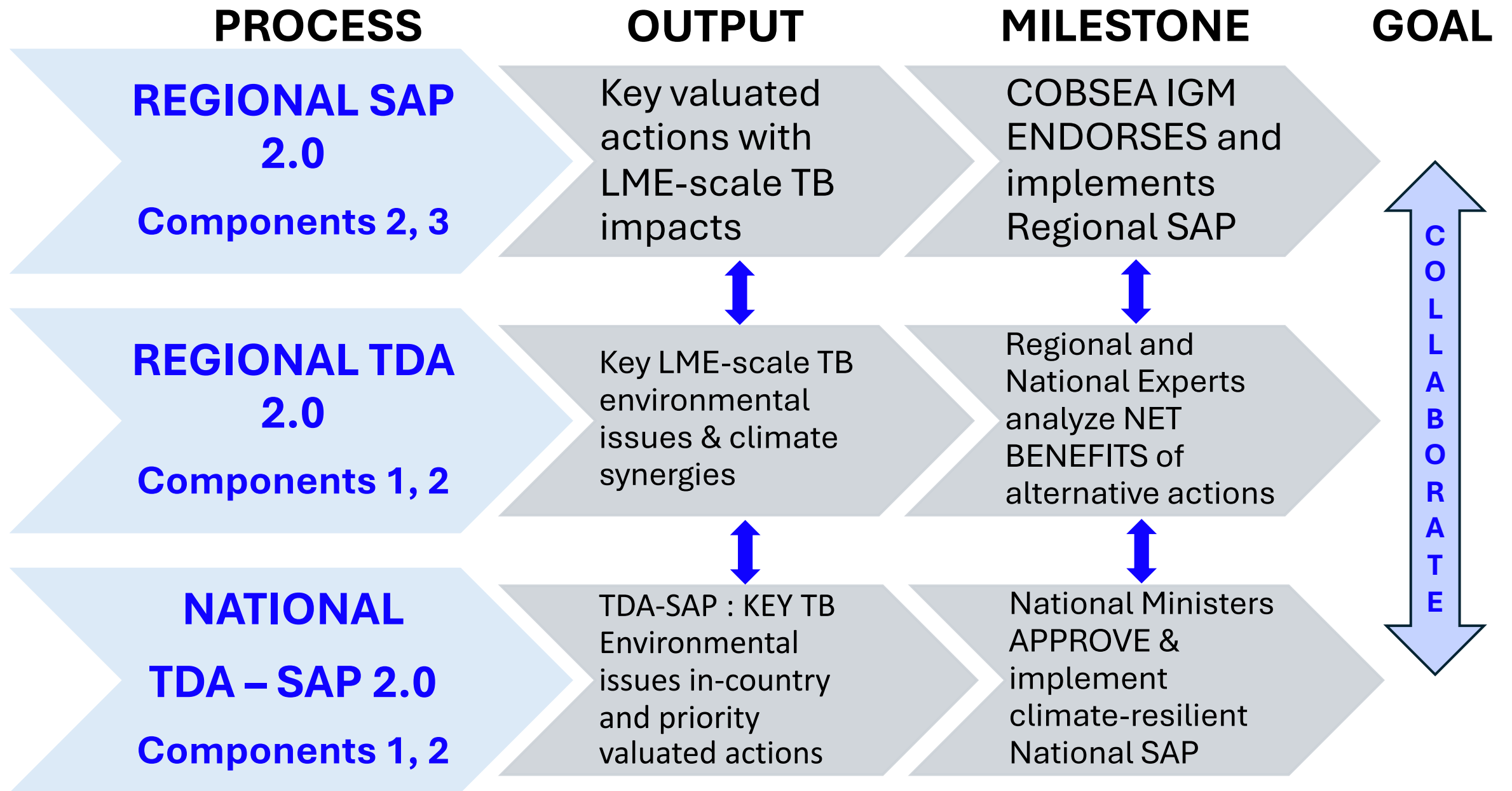


Risk Levels



Risk = Relative likelihood of failure
to sustain ecosystem services from
aquatic systems, that are essential
for human well-being, in a regime of
changing climate

Risk obtained through MIN-MAX Score Standardization Method



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Spatial Scale

TDA Reports

STARS Report

**COBSEA
STARS**

Regional &
National TDA
Infographics
May 2026

**Regional &
National STARS
Infographics
Jun 2026**

**Regional
TDA-SAP**

Regional TDA
Report
Jun-Oct 2025

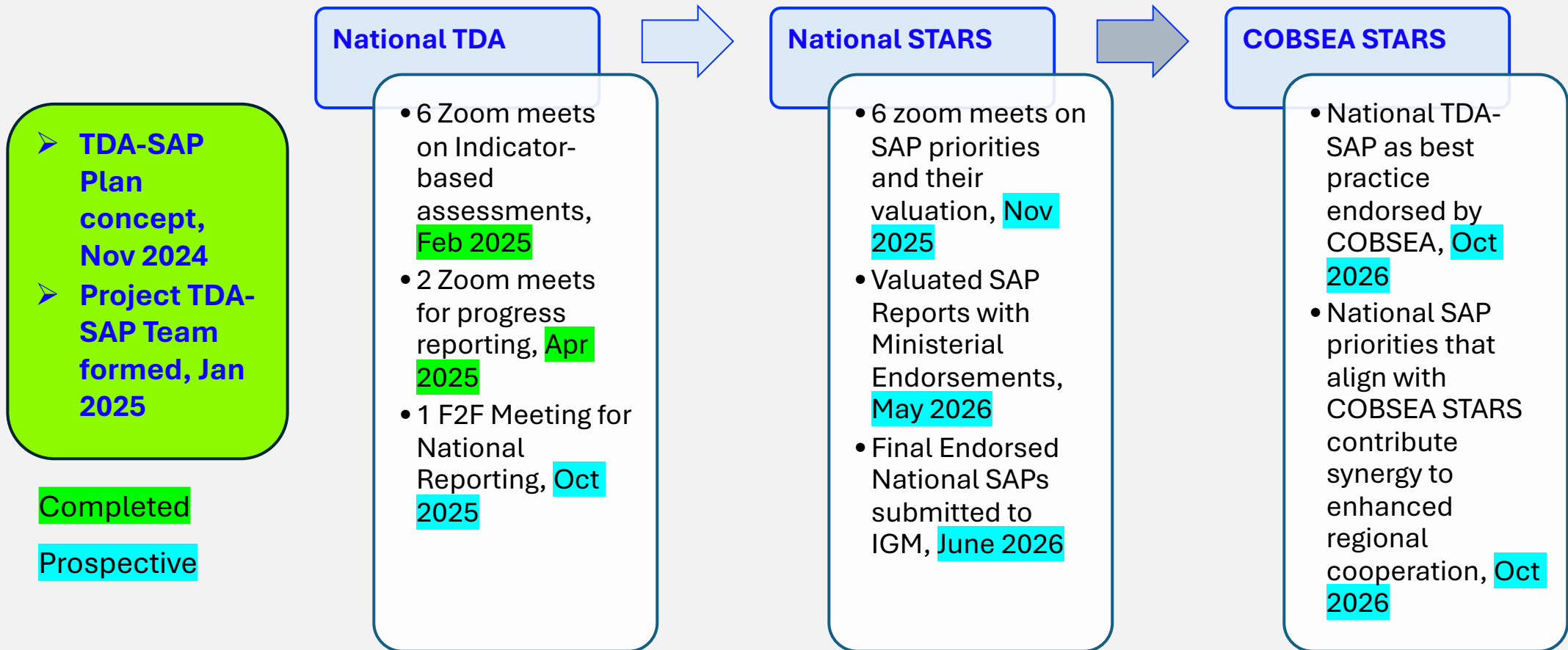
**For IGM-Endorsed
Regional STARS
Report
Mar-Jun 2026**

**National
TDA-SAP**

TDA Report
Feb-Aug 2025

**Govt- Approved
NAT STARS Report
Nov 2025 – May
2026**

Working with National TDA-SAP Teams Towards COBSEA STARS

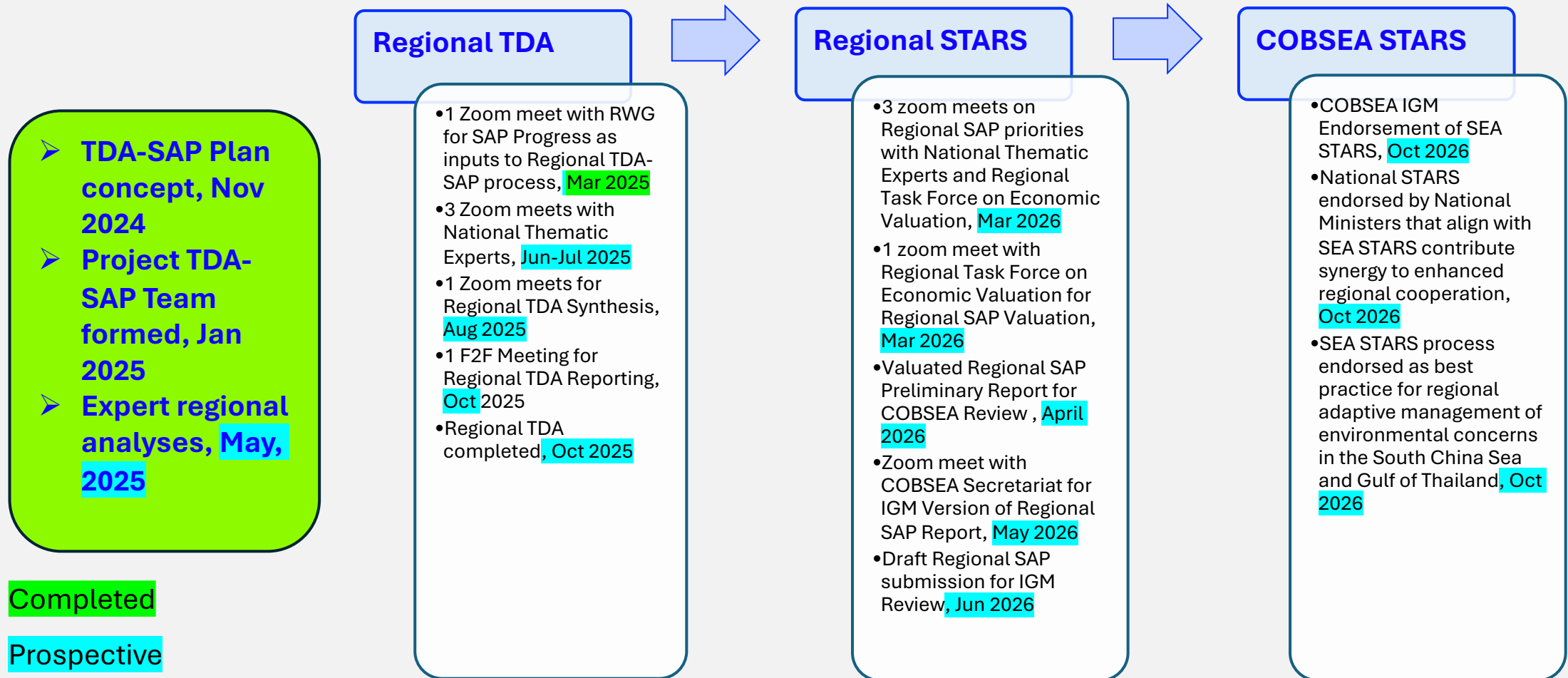


How may the **Regional Working Groups for Ecosystems Management and Management of Land-based Sources of Pollution** provide critical inputs to the **TDA-SAP 2.0**?

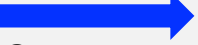
Potential roles of the Regional Working Groups

1. **Assess** the quality, temporal and spatial coverage, and updated **status of databases** for land-based pollution and ecosystems, in collaboration with national databases of SAP participating countries. (for TDA 2.0)
2. Periodically **assess the scientific bases and procedures for determining targets** for land-based pollution mitigation and ecosystem management, **within the context of warming and variable climate**. (for SAP 2.0)
3. **Provide periodic and quantifiable targets** of land-based pollution mitigation and of ecosystem management for consideration in the SAP Project, and in SAP 2.0, with progress being assessed every four years or as considered appropriate. (for SAP 2.0)
4. **Conduct periodic assessments at a regional scale of the status of land-based pollution and coastal ecosystems of the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand** to determine progress toward management targets, and the effectiveness of management actions in a regime of **warming climate**. (for TDA 2.0)
5. **Determine the ecosystem and economic gains/ losses resulting from successes/ failures in meeting management targets**. (for TDA 2.0)
6. **Propose strategies to improve the governance capacity** of the regional mechanisms to meet ecosystem and economic targets while enhancing the mitigation of land-based pollution and ecosystem management in the COBSEA region under a **warming climate regime**. (for SAP 2.0)

Working with Regional Working Groups, Thematic Experts Towards COBSEA STARS



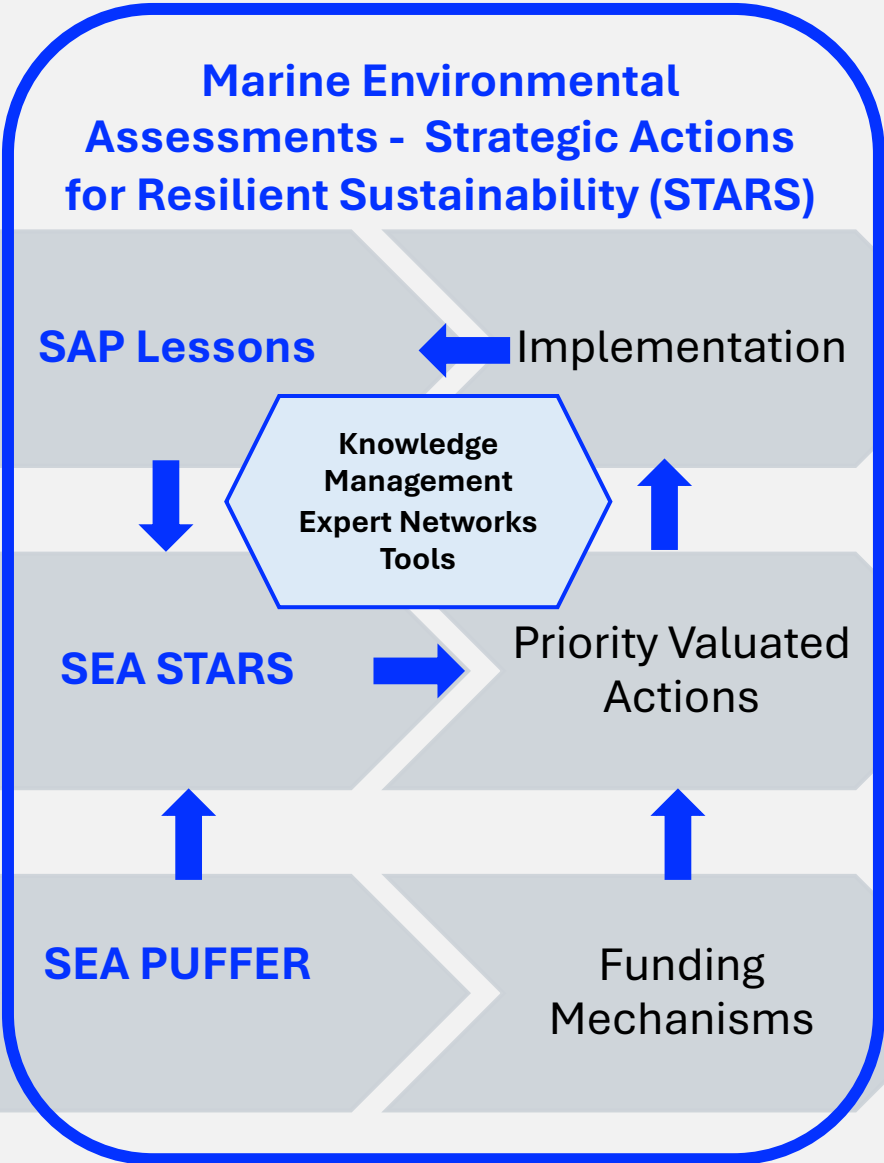
Identifying Key Component Deliverables
[SCS SAP Project Retreat, October 2024]

TDA – SAP 2.0  Adaptive Governance

Component 1: SAP Implementation

Component 2: TDA-SAP 2.0 = SEA STARS Tools, KM

Component 3: Regional Financing Mechanism = SEA PUFFER



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Spatial Scale

TDA Reports

STARS Report

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Regional &
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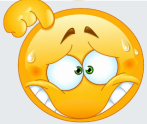





















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Progress in National TDA Indicator Assessment, Mar to April 2025

Country	Socioeconomics & Climate	Pollution	Ecosystems	Fisheries & Aquaculture	Governance	Country Average
Cambodia						
China				NA		
Indonesia						
Philippines						
Thailand						
Vietnam						
TDA Component Average						

Legend:



Doing very well



Facing minor challenges



Facing major challenges

1. The Ecosystems Component is proving to be the most challenging to assess because of lack of data, both spatial and time series.
2. The current government restructuring in Vietnam is affecting its National TDA Team to carry out its assessments.
3. Despite time constraints, 5 of 6 participating countries are facing only minor challenges in preparing their respective National TDA Reports.



Suggested Actions for the PSC

The six TDA and Regional TDA reports are anticipated to be presented at a face-to-face meeting in Hanoi in October 2025.

Following this, the development of the Regional Strategic Action Plan will commence.

The TDA-SAP Team suggests that the Regional Working Groups on Ecosystems, and on Land-based Pollution, as well as the Regional Task Force on Economic Valuation meet in subsequent face-to-face meetings in early 2026 to perform the following tasks:

- (1) **Critique** actions that have been implemented, identifying successes and challenges, with a view to replicate or upscale those that have proven to have significant and sustainable positive impacts to ecosystems and communities.
- (2) **Prioritize** and where possible complement targets of priority actions at national and regional levels to harness transformative synergies, including developing best practices and policies at multiple levels;
- (3) **Undertake economic valuation** of major and strategic actions to establish the net benefits these actions may yield at site, national and regional scales.



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Thank you!

