



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

**Third Meeting of the SCS SAP Steering Committee**

7-8 May 2025, Manila, Philippines

## **REPORT OF THE MEETING**



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## 1. Opening of the Meeting

### 1.1. Welcome address

1. Ms. Analiza Rebueta-Teh, Undersecretary of the Philippines' Department of Environment and Natural Resources and GEF Operational Focal Point, warmly welcomed and expressed gratitude to the participants on behalf of the Philippine government, the host of the third steering committee meeting. She acknowledged the project's implementation challenges and delays, ranging from the establishment of the project coordination office to the finalization of legal agreements across participating countries and implementing or executing agencies. She highlighted the progress made since the second steering committee meeting, including the project's approved extension through 2026, the adoption of a new execution modality, and the completion of the mid-term review. This review, she noted, provides a critical foundation for identifying strategic approaches based on lessons learned, assessing progress in the implementation of national action plans, and understanding the collaborative efforts and synergies among countries—particularly in the areas of coastal habitat and knowledge management, despite varying governance frameworks.

2. Ms. Teh emphasized the value of the steering committee meeting as an opportunity to discuss long-term sustainability following the project's conclusion—how to embed project outcomes and insights into national strategies and policies, sustain regional partnerships built through mechanisms such as COBSEA and PEMSEA, and reinforce support for implementing the SAP initiated by the project. As the GEF Operational Focal Point, she underscored her responsibility to ensure the project stays on course, that resources are used effectively, and that the anticipated global environmental benefits are realized. She also shared details on the upcoming GEF-9 replenishment meeting, where project-derived lessons and policy recommendations, such as enhancements to design and implementation strategies, could be presented. In the context of the regional SAP program, she highlighted the need for effective mechanisms to manage shared resources, elevate national planning to a broader regional scale, and enhance integration efforts toward achieving the region's collective vision for ocean sustainability. She reaffirmed her commitment to supporting the achievement of the project's goals.

3. Ms. Isabelle Vanderbeck, Representative of the United Nations Environment Programme and Task Manager of the project, expressed her gratitude to the Government of the Philippines and all participants of the second steering committee meeting, underscoring the significance of the project. She emphasized that sustainability must remain a central focus for the remainder of the project's implementation. Acknowledging progress, she noted that six countries are now actively engaged in implementing the Strategic Action Programme (SAP) at the national level, with special congratulations extended to Indonesia and Vietnam. With this momentum, the project is positioned to advance as a regional initiative fostering international cooperation on both national and regional fronts.

4. Ms. Vanderbeck referenced the comprehensive work plan ahead, highlighting major pillars of the project: the ongoing updates to the Strategic Action Programme and the Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis, collectively referred to as SEA-STARS (Seas of East Asia Strategic Action for Resilience and Sustainability). She raised the question of how the updated TDA and SAP could serve as strategic agendas to steer water resource management forward in the region. She also highlighted the development of the knowledge management mechanism known as SEA:LEARN (Seas of East Asia Learning Exchange and Resource Network), modeled after GEF's IW:LEARN platform, which aims to unify not only the six project countries but the broader regional community through shared learning and collaboration. She raised the question of how SEA:LEARN could be embedded and sustained as a regional learning platform that continues to foster knowledge exchange, best practices, and support networks, even after the project concludes. To maximize impact, the knowledge management platform

must be fed with rich, codified content—ranging from case studies and best practice stories to videos and peer exchanges. With a seasoned communications officer now on board, the project is well-positioned to amplify these efforts and enhance visibility. On the topic of long-term financial sustainability, the project is designing an innovative financing mechanism called SEA:PUFFER (Seas of East Asia Partnership United towards a Financing Facility for Environmental Restoration and Conservation). This initiative seeks to ensure lasting impact beyond the project's lifetime.

5. Looking forward, she stressed the importance of developing a clear post-project sustainability mechanism. Institutionalizing project outcomes within regional frameworks such as COBSEA and PEMSEA—both of which operate with regularly updated strategic plans—is critical. Ms. Vanderbeck emphasized the need to plan ahead for the continuity and resourcing of these platforms—not merely transferring technical tools to PEMSEA and COBSEA, but also establishing clear strategies for their effective and lasting use. She underscored the urgency of accelerating project execution, referencing Vietnam's progress as an example. While GEF typically avoids project extensions, a potential extension beyond 2026 may be necessary and should be carefully considered. Ultimately, she conveyed that showcasing results is more than just dissemination—it is a pathway to building national ownership and long-term buy-in. As the project enters its final phase, she urged all partners to embrace a sustainability mindset and act as champions for embedding institutionalization and continuity into the project's legacy.

6. Mr. Dan Budonescu, Representative of the United Nations Office for Project Services, expressed his appreciation to the Government of the Philippines and to all participants for the opportunity to participate, marking his first visit to Manila. He highlighted the importance of the project to UNOPS, noting it as a unique collaboration that unites UNEP's technical mandate and expertise with UNOPS's operational experience and support. He acknowledged UNEP's strong leadership and the motivating call to action delivered during the meeting. Mr. Budonescu emphasized that the project stands out because it is driven and implemented by the participating countries themselves—working at both local and national levels while coming together regionally. This approach fosters ownership and lays a strong foundation for long-term sustainability. He underscored the need to reflect on achievements and challenges, particularly in light of the mid-term review's findings and recommendations. Adapting based on these insights will be essential to ensuring the project is well-positioned for its next phase—executed sustainably and with lasting impact beyond its official timeframe. He concluded by extending his best wishes for a productive meeting and expressed enthusiasm in hearing the wealth of insights and information that would emerge from the meeting.

## **1.2. Introduction of members**

7. In the interest of time, the Secretariat introduced individually the members of the Project Steering Committee, consisting of the chairpersons of the National Interministerial Committee and National Technical Working Group or designated alternatives from Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam, the United Nations Environment Programme as implementing agency, the United Nations Office for Project Services as executing agency, and the Project Coordination Unit as secretary of the committee. Other UN organizations and national team members who attended as observers were also introduced. A total of twenty-five participants attended the meeting. The list of participants is attached as Annex 2 to this report.

## **1.3 Opening statements by Interministerial Committee Chairs (IMC)**

8. The Interministerial Committee (IMC) Chairpersons and representatives of participating countries were invited to provide opening statements on behalf of their governments. The highlights are provided below.

9. Mr. Meas Rithy, Deputy Director of the Department of Coastal and Marine Environment at Cambodia's Ministry of Environment and the country's National Focal Point representative, extended his appreciation to the Government of the Philippines for their warm hospitality and excellent logistical

arrangements. He underscored the urgency and shared responsibility of protecting and sustainably managing the vital marine and ecosystem resources of the South China Sea. This region, rich in biodiversity and critical habitats such as mangroves, coral reefs, seagrass beds, and coastal wetlands, supports the food security, livelihoods, and economic development of millions throughout the region. Reflecting on progress since the last meeting, Mr. Rithy highlighted the purposeful and determined implementation of both national and regional initiatives—ranging from mangrove replanting and designation of new protected areas to pollution control and the introduction of alternative livelihoods for coastal communities. These efforts, he noted, are both timely and impactful. For Cambodia specifically, Mr. Rithy shared that mangrove restoration efforts have expanded, site-specific management plans have been developed, and economic valuation studies initiated to better understand and communicate the true status of coastal ecosystems. He emphasized that this steering committee meeting is an opportunity to reflect on what the project has achieved thus far and to engage in forward-looking discussions that address ongoing challenges—such as data gaps and the continuity of country-level collaboration. He called on participants to use the platform to identify practical solutions and strengthen regional cooperation. A key topic he identified was the status of national and regional Transboundary Diagnostic Analyses (TDA), which will form the technical foundation for shared action and targeted investment. Successfully completing the TDA is crucial for guiding the region’s work in the coming years and positioning it to seize future opportunities within the global environmental framework. He encouraged all delegates to participate actively, with openness and a spirit of shared responsibility. By working together, countries can overcome common barriers and achieve long-lasting impact for both the environment and their communities. In closing, Mr. Rithy called for a recommitment to the SCS SAP project’s goals, urging participants to carry forward the vision—not only for today but for the generations to come. On behalf of the Cambodian delegation, he wished everyone a productive and meaningful meeting.

10. Ms. Wang Chunzi, Programme Officer at the Department of Marine Ecology and Environment under the Ministry of Ecology and Environment of China, and representative of the National Focal Point, expressed her appreciation for the meeting arrangements and extended gratitude to the Government of the Philippines for hosting the meeting. She underscored the relevance of Sustainable Development Goal 14, as identified in the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, which emphasizes the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans. She highlighted the ecological and economic importance of the South China Sea and the Gulf of Thailand, which are rich in biodiversity and serve as crucial marine ecosystems. Ms. Wang noted that the implementation of this project will significantly contribute to the achievement of both Agenda 2030 and the SDGs among participating countries. She emphasized China’s strong commitment to marine environmental protection, sharing that the government has issued and executed several key action plans, including the Action Plan for Marine Ecology and Environment Protection and the Mangrove Protection and Restoration Plan. She explained that the implementation of these national plans, in conjunction with the Strategic Action Programme, has been ongoing in China for many years and has yielded meaningful contributions to the protection and restoration of coastal and marine ecosystems. Ms. Wang concluded by reaffirming the importance of this project in advancing the SAP for the South China Sea and the Gulf of Thailand and conveyed her wishes for a productive and successful meeting.

11. Ms. Aditya Yuniarti, Senior Environmental Impact Assessor at the Directorate of Coastal and Marine Pollution and Degradation Control, Ministry of Environment/Environmental Protection Agency, and representative of both the National Focal Point and National Technical Focal Point, who were unable to attend due to prior commitments, conveyed her appreciation to the Steering Committee for organizing the meeting and to the Government of the Philippines for hosting. Indonesia has long anticipated the implementation of the SCS SAP project. The process of finalizing the Memorandum of Understanding with UNOPS faced delays due to several challenges, including a governmental transition. She informed that the MOU between Indonesia and UNOPS, along with the Grant Support Agreement between CCMRS-IPB and UNOPS, has now been signed, enabling the immediate launch of project activities in Indonesia. Ms. Yuniarti emphasized that the SCS SAP project components are highly aligned with the Ministry of Environment’s mandate and expressed confidence that the initiative will substantially contribute to enhancing the health of Indonesia’s coastal and marine ecosystems. The

marine sector in Indonesia involves active participation from various stakeholders, including government agencies, academic institutions, and the private sector—with existing strong inter-agency coordination. The Ministry is committed to further reinforcing collaboration under the Inter-Ministerial Committee structure for the effective implementation of the SCS SAP project. The cooperation among six countries surrounding the South China Sea offers a valuable platform for sharing knowledge and experiences in addressing habitat degradation, mitigating transboundary impacts, and preventing pollution from both land-based and other sources. Ms. Yuniarti expressed hope that the meeting would serve as a pivotal step—from strategy to implementation—laying the foundation for enduring positive impacts and a resilient future for our shared marine environment.

12. Ms. Amy Lecciones, Vice-President and Executive Director of the Society for the Conservation of Philippine Wetlands, and the National Focal Point of the SCS SAP Project, expressed her appreciation for the successful organization of the meeting in the Philippines. She shared that SCPW is the local implementing partner and grantee of UNOPS under the signed Grant Support Agreement (GSA) for the Philippines. Ms. Lecciones highlighted that the SCS SAP Project presents a valuable opportunity to advance their mission of halting and reversing the degradation of coastal and marine ecosystems that provide critical services for economic prosperity and human well-being. She noted that SCPW began implementing project activities following the signing of the GSA in November 2024. She expressed that despite delays in initiating the agreement, many of the SAP targets and several outputs from the 2008 SAP have already been achieved—and, in some cases, exceeded, as reported by the DENR's Biodiversity Management Bureau during the RSTC Meeting held in Bangkok in 2022. Since the SAP's endorsement, the DENR, in partnership with local governments, partner agencies, and development organizations, has continued implementing programs that contribute to the SAP's goals. This consistent effort demonstrates the Philippines' strong and enduring commitment to the shared regional vision adopted in 2008. Ms. Lecciones also shared a noteworthy development in Mabini coral reef sites, where the local mayor expressed strong support and adopted the SAP framework as the town's official conservation policy. By the end of 2024, the municipality enacted and began implementing the Integrated Coastal Management Code where institutional capacity-building efforts were carried out, and a sustainable financing mechanism was established, generating USD 400,000 in the first year—offering a replicable model for similarly situated sites.

13. Ms. Lecciones highlighted some of the achievements following the GSA signing such as the establishment of the Project Management Unit and a small TDA-SAP team, site visits and courtesy calls and project briefings with key local stakeholders to identify synergies with existing programs by partners such as the DENR field offices, the PCSD, and local government units. A project inception workshop was held in March with local stakeholders to collaboratively develop and finalized the work and financial plans for each site. Currently, the project faces delays due to local governments prioritizing election-related activities, which have made stakeholder coordination challenging. Potential changes in LGU leadership have also introduced uncertainty. In addition, the upcoming rainy season is expected to hinder field activities such as mangrove planting, coral and seagrass surveys, and site visits. Ms. Lecciones concluded by expressing gratitude for the continued support from the National Coordinator, PCU, UNOPS, and other partners. She emphasized SCPW's commitment to further collaboration and meaningful progress in the implementation of the SCS SAP Project.

14. Mr. Ukkrit Satapoomin, Deputy Director General of the Department of Marine and Coastal Resources, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of Thailand, and National Technical Focal Point of the SCS SAP Project, expressed his appreciation to UNEP, UNOPS, and the PCU for organizing the meeting, and acknowledged the Government of the Philippines for its warm hospitality and support in hosting the event. He reflected on the progress made since the second meeting in Bangkok, highlighting significant milestones including the adoption of key regional and national activities, the approval of the project's extension until 2026, and the transition to a single execution modality, with UNOPS serving as the executing agency. These developments mark important steps toward enhancing efficiency, strengthening governance, and fostering regional collaboration under the SCS SAP framework. This progress lays a solid foundation for coordinated action and more effective resource mobilization. Mr. Satapoomin emphasized that the region is now at a pivotal juncture. The

South China Sea, as an ecologically vital yet increasingly threatened marine area, requires urgent and collective action. He stressed the importance of delivering site-based solutions through the SCS SAP that protect biodiversity, safeguard fisheries, and enhance coastal resilience. Thailand remains steadfast in its commitment to these goals, especially in integrating environmental conservation with broader economic and social development. He concluded by reaffirming the value of the Steering Committee as a platform to align strategies, improve governance, and promote nature-based investments. He underscored its role as a critical space for dialogue and collaboration that drives tangible action toward a secure, sustainable, and prosperous future for the region.

15. Dr. Nguyen Thi Phuong Mai, Deputy Director General of the Viet Nam Environmental and Marine Sciences Institute (VEMSI), Ministry of Agriculture and Environment, and representative of the National Focal Point, expressed her sincere appreciation and joy in attending the meeting—her first time in Manila and her first in-person participation in a project meeting. She emphasized the significance of the gathering for Viet Nam, particularly in light of recent structural changes. She shared that the Vietnamese government had recently approved the establishment of the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment, a merger of the former Ministries of Agriculture and Rural Development and of Natural Resources and Environment. On behalf of VEMSI, she expressed gratitude to UNEP and UNOPS for their ongoing support and patience. She acknowledged that Viet Nam's implementation started later than anticipated, and emphasized the need to accelerate progress in the coming months. Dr. Mai noted that at the next meeting, Viet Nam looks forward to sharing the achievements of its project implementation. She also expressed hope for continued support and knowledge exchange with UNEP, UNOPS, and fellow participating countries. In closing, she extended a warm invitation for future collaboration and expressed Viet Nam's aspiration to host an upcoming project meeting. On behalf of the Vietnamese delegation, she conveyed sincere thanks to the organizers for their careful preparation and logistical arrangements that made the meeting possible.

## **2. Organisation of the Meeting**

### **2.1. Designation of officers**

16. In accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the Project Steering Committee Meeting, the Committee considered the election of a Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson for the current session. It was noted that no Rapporteur would be selected, as reporting responsibilities would be undertaken by the Project Coordination Unit (PCU).

17. Mr. Ukkrit Satapoomin of Thailand proposed, in the interest of continuity, that Cambodia and China be designated as Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson, respectively. This was seconded by Ms. Amy Lecciones of the Philippines.

18. With no further objections, the Steering Committee agreed to the following designations:

- Chairperson: Cambodia represented by Mr. Meas Rithy
- Vice-Chairperson: China represented by Ms. Wang Chunzi

### **2.2. Organisation of work**

19. Mr. Reynaldo Molna of the Project Coordination Unit briefed the Steering Committee on the proposed organisation of work, the list of documents available to the meeting and administrative arrangements for the conduct of the meeting, which will be conducted in plenary and in English. The list of documents is attached as Annex 3 to this report.

## **3. Adoption of the Meeting Agenda**

20. The Chairperson invited the Committee to review the draft and annotated agendas, prepared by the Secretariat and circulated as documents SCSSAP PSC.3/1 and SCSSAP PSC.3/2. Members were encouraged to suggest any amendments or additional items for consideration. Mr. Poulsen noted a slight

revision to the agenda, proposing that the meeting begin with presentations on national activities and achievements, followed by updates on regional efforts under the SCS SAP Project. He also recommended that the Philippines present first, due to the limited availability of the DENR Undersecretary.

21. As no further comments were made, the Committee adopted the agenda and annotated agenda, attached as Annex 1 to this report.

#### **4. Report on National Activities to Implement the SCS SAP Project**

22. The Chairperson invited representatives of each participating country, the Chairs of the National Technical Focal Points and National Technical Working Groups, to present their respective national activities implementing the SCS SAP Project. These presentations followed a standard template previously circulated by the Secretariat.

23. The following representatives delivered their national reports:

- Ms. Amy Lecciones, Executive Director and Vice-President of the Society for the Conservation of Philippine Wetlands, and Mr. Michal Promentilla, Professor of De La Salle University
- Mr. Than Monomoyith, Chief of Office, Department of Marine and Coastal Zone Conservation, General Directorate for Natural Protected Areas, Ministry of Environment
- Dr. Yu Yunjun, Senior Engineer, South China Institute of Environmental Sciences, Ministry of Ecology and Environment
- Ms. Aditya Yuniarti, Senior Environmental Impact Assessor, Directorate of Coastal and Marine Pollution and Degradation Control, Ministry of Environment/Environmental Protection Agency
- Mr. Ukkrit Satapoomin, Deputy Director General, Department of Marine and Coastal Resources, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
- Dr. Nguyen Thi Phuong Mai, Deputy Director General, Viet Nam Environmental and Marine Sciences Institute, Ministry of Agriculture and Environment

24. All countries reported on their implementation progress, covering the establishment of national project structures, appointment of focal points and institutions, organization of key national meetings, and achievements in meeting SAP targets from 2008 to 2024. Presentations also included discussions on implementation challenges, lessons learned, recommendations, and next steps. For detailed information, please refer to the individual country presentations.

#### **5. Report on Regional Activities to Implement the SCS SAP Project**

25. The Chairperson invited the Secretariat to present document SCSSAP PSC.3/3, outlining the status and progress of the SCS SAP Project from its second steering committee meeting to the present, along with plans for 2025 and beyond. The Steering Committee was invited to review the report, offer comments and suggestions, and consider the regional activities presented.

26. Mr. Reynaldo Molina briefed the Committee on accomplishments covering the period from the second Steering Committee meeting in January 2024 to the present, noting that prior achievements were already reported in the second steering committee meeting. For complete details, he referred participants to the current and previous meeting documents.

27. Mr. Anders Poulsen, Senior Project Manager, expressed appreciation for the informative national presentations. He highlighted regional activities undertaken since the last meeting, beginning with recent developments related to coral reefs, mangroves, and seagrass ecosystems. He also summarized major events since last meeting, including participation in regional meetings and conferences, mid-term project review, an update of the transboundary diagnostic analysis, and the launch of the small grants mechanism. Mr. Poulsen emphasized efforts to establish a regional network of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) that would help countries achieve the 30x30 targets under the Global

Biodiversity Framework. He noted that the targets should be approached both quantitatively and qualitatively, considering ecological connectivity and site representation. He also recapped the October 2024 project retreat, which shaped the project's direction for the next two years and identified four key deliverables, namely: 1) SEA:LEARN – Knowledge Management Platform, 2) SEA:STARS – Integrated TDA-SAP Process, 3) SEA:PUFFER – Grants Mechanism, and 4) Regional Cooperation – Alignment with COBSEA initiatives.

28. Mr. Mahesh Pradhan, COBSEA Coordinator, underscored the importance of synergies between the SCS SAP and COBSEA, particularly the collaboration between respective working groups on marine and coastal ecosystems. He raised concerns about ensuring sustainability of joint initiatives like SEA:LEARN and SEA:PUFFER should COBSEA take them forward, emphasizing the need for lasting impact and institutional support. He noted that upcoming discussions at the COBSEA Intergovernmental Meeting (IGM) in Malaysia would address these synergies further, including the establishment of a task force on strengthening COBSEA and potentially integrating efforts with the SCS SAP Project. Mr. Pradhan urged the Committee to give strong consideration to the sustainability of project outcomes and hoped for productive deliberations.

29. To advance the project's communication strategy, Ms. Kristine Custodio Gudczinski, Communication and Knowledge Management Specialist, shared updates on stakeholder engagement goals. She emphasized promoting regional cooperation and long-term health of the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand LMEs through effective communication. She outlined plans to enhance communication capacity using a mix of traditional and cost-effective digital tools, including webinars, workshops, and collaborative platforms. Ms. Gudczinski encouraged the use of unified messaging in local languages and introduced storytelling formats—such as photo essays, documentaries, and partner interviews—as key tools to humanize the project's impact. Policy briefs were also highlighted as a way to clarify project outcomes and opportunities for collaboration with organizations such as COBSEA, PEMSEA, and IWLEARN. She expressed enthusiasm about engaging with participating countries to strengthen communication efforts and thanked them for their ongoing collaboration.

30. The Chairperson invited the Steering Committee for comments and suggestions on the national and regional activities and accomplishments presented. With no further comments, the Steering Committee considered the activities and accomplishments reported.

## **6. Presentation and Discussion of the Findings and Recommendations of the Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the SCS SAP Project**

31. The Chairperson invited Mr. Peter Whalley, Mid-Term Review Consultant, to present the findings and recommendations from the Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the SCS SAP Project. Mr. Whalley expressed his appreciation to all who contributed to the MTR process conducted in February, highlighting the value of their inputs. He began with a brief overview of the review's purpose, methodology, and significance, followed by a summary of its key findings, conclusions, and recommendations. Mr. Whalley emphasized that mid-term reviews are a standard practice in internationally funded projects, serving as constructive opportunities to evaluate progress and identify areas for improvement. They are not meant to be adversarial but rather fact-finding and solution-oriented. The review also aimed to surface good practices and lessons that could be shared regionally or globally with similar initiatives.

32. Mr. Whalley acknowledged that the current project builds upon a successful earlier phase, culminating in the adoption of the Strategic Action Programme (SAP) in 2008. However, multiple stakeholders noted a significant delay between the SAP's adoption and the finalization of this follow-up project, including the approval process with the Global Environment Facility (GEF). This gap contributed to early setbacks in momentum. While the project design was conceptually strong and highly comprehensive—with three interconnected and interdependent components supported by cross-cutting initiatives in communication and knowledge management—its complexity posed challenges.

With 16 outcomes and 64 outputs or indicators, the reporting burden on the Project Coordination Unit (PCU) was substantial. Mr. Whalley pointed out that this volume of deliverables made the project design less economical, despite its solid conceptual foundation. An inception report helped clarify certain outputs and flagged potential redundancies that originated during earlier planning phases. Nevertheless, further delays followed, particularly in recruiting key project staff and adapting to transitions in the executing agency, compounded by disruptions related to the COVID-19 pandemic. He noted lack of progress in regional components between July and December 2024, as documented in the PIRs and UNEP's quarterly reports. These factors have collectively hampered the project's overall progress and achievements to date.

33. Mr. Whalley noted the following overall findings in his mid-term review. The project initially lacked a dedicated communication strategy, specifically a designated Communication Officer which affected the clarity of the project's objectives and expectations, both for participating countries and the Project Coordination Unit (PCU). The transition between executing agencies also contributed to implementation delays, particularly at the regional level. While UNOPS was actively engaged during the project's inception and effectively supported national activities, the regional components lagged behind, impacting the project's overall performance to date. A key turning point came with the project retreat, which helped realign the team and resulted in a more structured and streamlined plan for delivery. This process effectively repackaged the project's direction into a set of tangible deliverables, while remaining true to the GEF-endorsed objectives, outcomes, and outputs. The outputs of the retreat have laid the groundwork for developing tools and approaches that may be adopted by COBSEA. This positions COBSEA as a potential long-term coordinating body for the regional SAP, helping to sustain the results of the project beyond its lifecycle.

34. In terms of the findings per component, Mr. Whalley expressed that the national pilot activities in Cambodia, China, and Thailand have progressed remarkably well and are on track for completion by the current project end date of December 2026. These national initiatives have been prepared and implemented effectively, showcasing strong engagement from local and national governments, as well as active community participation as experienced in a field visit, where clear evidence of socioeconomic benefits was observed at a demonstration site, including community recognition of ecosystem-based livelihoods and support for environmental restoration. This success suggests potential for expanding community-based activities such as promoting sustainable food sourced from rehabilitated habitats, and exploring partnerships for long-term sustainability. Encouragingly, both community groups and local authorities have already begun identifying potential private sector partners to support continued habitat maintenance and restoration. He noted that the Philippines pilot project, launched in November 2024, will require significantly more time to reach completion by December 2026, and a one-year extension is recommended to ensure its proper delivery and to share lessons learned with other participating countries. For Indonesia and Viet Nam, the ongoing difficulty in finalizing agreements with UNOPS remains a major concern. Without resolution in the coming months, it is unlikely that pilot projects or other initiatives in these countries can be implemented even with an extension. He encouraged the Project Steering Committee to reassess the allocation of GEF resources to ensure they are utilized effectively, avoiding the return of funds to the GEF Secretariat.

35. Mr. Whalley stressed that Component 2 focuses on updating the Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) and Strategic Action Programme, now branded as the SEA:STARS introduced during the project retreat. A notable achievement within this component is the development of a detailed and well-structured work plan by the TDA-SAP team which sets a clear target for delivering the revised SAP in time for consideration at the 2026 COBSEA IGM. The organization and clarity of this component make it a model for other parts of the project to follow. Progress under Component 3 has been limited. Although initial efforts have begun to develop a regional small grants mechanism, the process remains in its early stages. Given the substantial resources involved, it is essential that this component not be rushed as adequate time is needed to establish robust criteria for grant selection and to ensure that implementation aligns with project objectives. It is anticipated that this component will also require an extension to allow for careful planning and execution.

36. Mr. Whalley noted that the project's theory of change, developed during the inception phase, served as a comprehensive framework encompassing all 16 outcomes and 64 outputs, and provided a detailed roadmap for achieving the project's overarching objectives. Following the project retreat, it became clear that streamlining the theory of change into a set of focused deliverables would enhance clarity and implementation. These refined components reflect a strategic consolidation of the original design and underscore the project's commitment to achieving both its immediate objectives and long-term regional impact. The resulting deliverables include: SAP Pilot Implementation, SEA:STARS – the updated TDA-SAP process, SEA:LEARN – a platform for knowledge and communication management, and SEA:PUFFER – a mechanism to ensure long-term financial and institutional sustainability for coordinating SAP implementation.

37. In conclusions, Mr. Whalley stressed that the progress achieved in the three national pilot activities—Cambodia, China, and Thailand stands out as a key strength of the SCS SAP Project. These efforts reflect strong country ownership and effective implementation. The Philippines pilot project is also expected to conclude successfully but will require focused efforts within a relatively short timeline, along with strategies to capture and share lessons learned with other countries. He stressed that the project retreat was considered a major milestone, successfully redefining the project's structure while maintaining the integrity of the original GEF-approved framework. He noted that the likelihood of completing all activities by December 2026 appears low, and recommended that the project be extended, particularly for outstanding aspects of Component 1, significant elements under Component 3, and possibly selected activities within Component 2. A central issue requiring resolution is the long-term sustainability of the project's outcomes, specifically the ongoing coordination of SAP implementation. COBSEA has been identified as the most suitable entity to assume this role. Formal endorsement will be required from both the Steering Committee and the COBSEA Intergovernmental Meeting. One proposed approach, should the project be extended, is for COBSEA to serve as the institutional home for the extension phase. This would support the orderly transition of project materials and establish a practical foundation for the project's exit strategy.

38. Mr. Whalley recommended the following actions for the Steering Committee consideration:

- A key priority for the PSC is to make an informed decision regarding the allocation of resources for Indonesia and Viet Nam. If agreements with UNOPS cannot be finalized in the immediate future, these resources must be reassessed to ensure optimal use. While there is hope that agreements can still be reached—enabling a more comprehensive project outcome—a one-year extension would be essential to complete the pilot activities in these countries.
- The PSC is also encouraged to initiate formal discussions on a potential project extension. Based on current progress, a minimum one-year extension is recommended. Simultaneously, the PSC should consider formally endorsing COBSEA as the appropriate mechanism for continued regional coordination of the SAP, facilitating the project's transition out of GEF support and into long-term institutional ownership.
- The recent appointment of a Communication Officer within the PCU is a positive development. Moving forward, the updated communication strategy should promote two-way engagement between the PCU and participating countries. In addition to disseminating updates, the strategy should facilitate regular input from national partners, including sharing the outcomes of national meetings where relevant to other stakeholders.
- The pilot launch of the small grants mechanism is another important step that warrants careful implementation. This facility holds substantial potential to support targeted activities, and it is vital that the criteria for project selection are well-defined and the process carefully managed. During the review mission, a range of ideas emerged from countries and pilot sites for potential small grants support—such as documenting traditional knowledge, scaling best practices in SAP implementation, and customizing interventions to meet national needs.
- In the longer term, establishing a sustainable financing mechanism for SAP coordination is essential. Component 3 of the project includes resources earmarked for this purpose. The PCU and UNOPS are urged to identify and engage qualified consultants or institutions to design a long-term

financial and governance model—potentially enabling COBSEA to take up SAP coordination sustainably in the years ahead.

- Finally, the development of a robust exit strategy remains critical. This strategy should ensure the effective transfer of project tools, knowledge products, and results to COBSEA, thereby anchoring long-term coordination of the SAP at the regional level.

39. Following Mr. Whalley’s presentation, the Chairperson opened the meeting for discussion. Building on earlier presentations and comments, Ms. Isabelle Vanderbeck highlighted that sustainability is the common thread uniting the committee’s efforts. She stressed the importance of integrating sustainability into the project design and exit strategy—across content, financial planning, and strategic alignment—to support future SAP implementations. She noted that sustainability has already been formalized in the Mid-Term Review report and encouraged everyone to keep it top of mind, both nationally and regionally, to preserve the project’s long-term value. She expressed enthusiasm for the idea of compiling a SEA:Food cookbook, inspired by a project site visit, showcasing recipes from across project locations as a unique regional contribution.

40. Mr. Anders Poulsen extended his thanks for the constructive nature of the MTR report, particularly appreciating its actionable recommendations. He provided progress updates, noting that Indonesia has signed its cooperation agreement, and Vietnam’s has been approved and is awaiting signature—indicating positive movement from both countries. While Component 3 has experienced delays, he acknowledged that ongoing work with COBSEA is helping to address those challenges. Looking ahead, he flagged sustainability as a key concern if the project concludes in 2026, and supported the recommendation to extend the project—a proposal also echoed by Indonesia and Vietnam.

41. Mr. Dan Budonescu voiced his support for the proposed project extension, recognizing that while additional time implies further operational costs, he believes a workable solution can be reached. He suggested that PCU, in collaboration with UNOPS, formulate a pragmatic work plan and budget to facilitate the extension in a responsible and effective way.

42. Mr. Yu Yunjun raised a fundamental question about defining the project's success and its completion timeline. He noted that while an extension to 2027 is recommended, some countries like China, Cambodia, and Thailand may be able to complete their components by 2026. In light of this, he asked whether partial closure could be considered. He also addressed the sustainability pathway outlined in the report, particularly the proposed role of COBSEA. He emphasized that any decision regarding COBSEA must be made through its Intergovernmental Meeting, and that alternate options should be explored by the PCU, with support from UNEP, as part of the project’s exit strategy. Mr. Yu underscored that COBSEA includes nine countries while the project involves six, which presents uncertainties about full consensus at the IGM.

43. Mr. Whalley stressed that the proposed extension is essential for countries that commenced project activities later, as well as for the successful completion of other components. This would ensure a smooth transition of knowledge and outputs to COBSEA or another appropriate body. He acknowledged that the more advanced countries are wrapping up Component 1, but may still benefit from observing progress in Components 2 and 3—particularly in terms of shared lessons, coordination structures, and governance mechanisms. Regarding COBSEA, Mr. Whalley clarified that the project cannot mandate COBSEA but it can recommend COBSEA as a fitting institution for SAP coordination and implementation.

44. Ms. Vanderbeck emphasized the importance of reaffirming the SEA:STARS at a high political level, mirroring the 2008 endorsement of the SAP. She highlighted the critical role of extending the project to secure formal endorsement of the revised TDA and SAP, and SEA:STARS, as well as to deepen country participation in Components 2 and 3, which anchor the project's long-term sustainability through mechanisms like SEA:PUFFER and SEA:LEARN. On COBSEA, Ms. Vanderbeck acknowledged its distinct political framework and assured that the PCU will integrate the project’s

documentation and outputs into COBSEA's review process for ratification at the next IGM. She relayed that the COBSEA Coordinator is open to institutionalizing the project outcomes but stressed the importance of developing a solid strategy. She stressed that the project should not assume that future funding will come entirely from COBSEA, and instead presents a timely opportunity to create a financing model that can reinvest in regional conservation efforts.

45. Mr. Poulsen clarified that the project has two distinct endpoints: the conclusion of the Project Cooperation Agreement (PCA), which many participating countries are on track to finalize by next year or sooner, and the broader completion of the project itself. The latter encompasses regional activities and long-term sustainability, extending beyond the PCA. He emphasized that project planning is strategically aligned with the upcoming COBSEA IGM in October 2026, where presenting the project's key deliverables will be a focal point. He noted ongoing collaboration and communication with COBSEA and expressed strong confidence in integrating the project's outcomes with COBSEA's framework. While acknowledging other potential options, Mr. Poulsen underscored that COBSEA remains the most logical and inclusive platform as it covers all project countries, and both the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand LMEs.

46. Dr. Xiangbin Pei, National Coordinator of China highlighted the importance of harmonizing the project's transition into COBSEA with its existing modalities—specifically its working groups, strategic direction, and activity structure. He recommended the development of a transfer plan that ensures alignment with COBSEA's operational frameworks. Mr. Poulsen emphasized the critical role that national coordinators can play in this transition, pointing to their potential as vital resources for embedding project efforts into COBSEA mechanisms at the national level.

47. Ms. Vanderbeck provided additional context, explaining that the project and COBSEA have maintained a strong and consistent dialogue from the start, with the project regularly reporting its progress at COBSEA IGMs. She noted that the COBSEA Coordinator participated in the October project retreat, which has since been recognized as a milestone in the collaborative relationship between the two entities. She emphasized the broad regional support for the project, including from non-participating countries like Singapore and Malaysia which will be engaged in the regional TDA and SAP findings, and South Korea has been especially supportive particularly around establishing a financing mechanism that could continue beyond the current project. Ms. Vanderbeck suggested that this mechanism could potentially be formalized through ongoing cooperation with South Korea under COBSEA, possibly even positioning South Korea as a host for a regional activity center, complementing the existing center on pollution in Indonesia.

48. Mr. Romeo Trono, National Coordinator of the Philippine sought clarification regarding the process surrounding the development of the TDA and SAP, particularly the formulation of the new Strategic Action Programme to be called SEA:STARS. He noted that this document is intended to be endorsed at the ministerial level by all participating countries. He inquired whether COBSEA will be responsible for implementing the SEA:STARS, and based on this, develop a new project document to be submitted for GEF funding. Mr. Trono also raised a question regarding the timing and flexibility of SEA:STARS endorsements. He wondered whether all six countries must sign immediately or if some countries could delay their endorsement especially in cases where internal issues may prevent early commitment.

49. Ms. Vanderbeck emphasized that a third phase of GEF funding to implement the SAP should not be expected, as this current project already represents the SAP's implementation phase. She stressed the need to reduce reliance on external funding sources and shift toward regional financial self-reliance. She highlighted the ongoing efforts to establish a regional financing mechanism under Component 3, one that could draw upon a diverse mix of funding streams such as blue carbon initiatives, nature and water funds, public-private partnerships, or even an endowment fund. She noted that South Korea has already expressed a willingness to contribute to this vision. She reinforced the importance of country ownership and sustainability, urging participants to engage actively in shaping a future that does not hinge on continual donor support. While GEF may still have a role in funding targeted components of

the SAP, this would likely apply to a select group of countries rather than a full regional initiative. GEF could also potentially contribute as one donor among many to the broader regional financing facility being conceptualized. Regarding SEA:STARS, Ms. Vanderbeck noted that while donor requirements like GEF may insist on formal signatures as a sign of country commitment, other funding partners may prioritize action and collaboration over formal endorsement. She urged participants to view the SEA:STARS signature not merely as a procedural step, but as a concrete expression of national ownership. In aligning SEA:STARS with regional mechanisms like COBSEA, she observed that although COBSEA has its own strategic planning framework, SEA:STARS—grounded in robust scientific analysis—may serve as a more comprehensive and forward-looking strategic agenda for the region.

50. The Chairperson expressed appreciation for the Steering Committee's comments, suggestions, and clarifications regarding the mid-term review, and requested the Secretariat to take note. With no further remarks, the Steering Committee endorsed the mid-term review report and directed the PCU to implement the recommendations in collaboration with UNEP and UNOPS.

## **7. Presentation and Discussion on the Implementation and Progress of the Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis/Strategic Action Programme (TDA/SAP) Process**

51. The Chairperson invited the TDA/SAP Lead Consultant, Dr. Liana Talaue-McManus to present the implementation and progress of the Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) and the Strategic Action Programme (SAP) development and updating. She provided an overview of the TDA-SAP, focusing on discussing the process and its emphasis on addressing transboundary environmental issues, and the history and comparison of the original TDA-SAP developed 25 years ago and the current TDA-SAP 2.0, outlining the design and process, the progress achieved so far achieved including the workplan and schedule and actions requested from the PSC.

52. Dr. McManus explained that the TDA-SAP is a two-part process – the Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) which identifies environmental problems that cross national borders, examines their impacts and consequences, and seeks to uncover the root causes of these problems, and the Strategic Action Programme (SAP) which outlines the actions needed to address those root causes. By tackling the root causes, we aim to deliver the most sustainable solutions—and because these are transboundary issues, the benefits extend beyond national borders to the regional and even global level. In the GEF framework, SAPs—whether national or regional—must be endorsed at the ministerial level. This endorsement signifies a government's commitment to implementing transformative actions. She further explained that transboundary problems involve two or more countries that may relate to migratory species that cross borders, ecosystems or resources of shared significance, or threats that originate in one country but affect others. The most critical transboundary issues are those shared national concerns that carry regional or global implications.

53. She explained that the TDA-SAP 1.0 conducted 25 years ago has identified and ranked four priority transboundary issues – 1) habitat loss and modification, 2) overexploitation of fisheries in the Gulf of Thailand, 3) land-based pollution, and 4) short supply and degraded quality of freshwater. Three were addressed in SAP 1.0, which was endorsed by the COBSI IGM. A subsequent SAP was developed and endorsed in 2008, but it did not include a new TDA as it relied on the original TDA 1.0. That means in over 25 years, the region has only undertaken one TDA. She compared TDA-SAP 1.0 and TDA-SAP 2.0 in terms of scope. TDA 1.0 focused on three major global drivers of transboundary environmental problems: global trade, land-based pollution, and ecosystem modification and overharvest. In contrast, TDA-SAP 2.0 is shaped by the three planetary crises: Climate change, Pollution, and Biodiversity loss. These crises are central to the analysis in TDA 2.0. She also presented the essential elements of TDA-SAP 2.0: People and climate (merged as one element), Ecosystems and fisheries, Pollution, and Governance. Finally, she mapped the TDA-SAP process across the three project components, emphasizing the importance of scale. At the foundation is the national TDA-SAP deliverable, which draws from Components One and Two.

54. She presented briefly the three project components including the specific targets for the TDA-SAP as defined in the project document, which provided a clearer picture of what is expected from the TDA and SAP processes at both the national and regional levels. She presented the key products identified during the project retreat in October and explained that the TDA-SAP 2.0 will potentially evolve into the SEA:STARS.

55. Dr. McManus shared the progress on developing the national TDA and national STARS including the timeline for 2025 and 2026 dedicated to the TDA and SAP processes at both national and regional levels, with the ultimate goal of endorsement at the COBSEA IGM. For the national TDA, approximately eight Zoom meetings were held between February and April to discuss the indicator-based assessments, including a progress reporting in April which were substantive and encouraging. The goal is to finalize all national TDA reports by August 15, with a face-to-face meeting in October to present the results. For the national STARS, the process will continue with online meetings to refine national priorities—many of which are already identified in the national TDAs. The next step is to conduct economic evaluations of the proposed actions, which will then form the basis of the National Strategic Action Plans (STARS). These national STARS are expected to be endorsed by May 2026, in time to be submitted as supporting documents to the COBSEA IGM by June 2026.

56. She emphasized the important role of the regional working groups and the regional task force on economic evaluation in the TDA-SAP process. For the TDA, key inputs include the quality of databases, periodic regional assessments of ecosystem and pollution status, and analyses of ecosystem and economic outcomes from past management efforts. For the SAP, the regional working groups are expected to contribute to: scientific assessments and procedures for setting management targets. These functions have been critical in the past and will continue to be essential moving forward. The national TDA teams and the regional network of experts are essential pillars of any sustainability strategy. The regional working groups already completed one Zoom meeting in March. Several more are scheduled to support the development of the regional TDA. The regional STARS will begin early next year, but they'll have the shortest timeline, as the national SAPs must also be finalized. The national TDA and SAP, along with the regional TDA, all feed into the regional SAP.

57. In terms of suggested actions for the PSC, Dr. McManus expressed that the TDA-SAP team recommends that the regional working groups on ecosystems and land-based pollution and the regional task force on economic valuation, be convened to carry out three key tasks: 1) Critique previously implemented actions, identifying lessons learned; 2) Prioritize and, where possible, align targets of national and regional priority actions to harness synergies and develop best practices and policies; and 3) Undertake economic valuation to support evidence-based decision-making.

58. Following Dr. McManus presentation, the Chairperson opened the meeting for discussion. Ms. Vanderbeck raised a question about whether Malaysia and Singapore would be included in the process of updating the TDA SAP process into the SEA:STAR. Dr. McManus explained that while only six countries are mobilized at the national level, the regional team has the capacity to include all COBSEA countries in the regional analysis. Since we are using global datasets, we can certainly include Singapore and Malaysia in the regional TDA. The key difference is that they do not have national teams conducting national TDA-SAPs, which creates a gap. We need to find a way to engage them in the regional consultation and secure their inputs. Mr. Poulsen suggested that once the regional TDA results are available, it should be presented to Singapore and Malaysia well ahead of the next IGM to allow for consultation and to address any concerns they may have.

59. Mr. Yu Yunjun shared that the TDA team in China is progressing well. He raised concerns about the complexity of the indicators and goals, particularly around fisheries and aquaculture. He suggested that these topics might be streamlined or integrated under biodiversity, especially since fisheries often fall under the FAO rather than UNEP. Given limited time and resources, he emphasized the need to focus on priority issues. Dr. McManus explained that the TDA is designed to assess the full range of environmental problems—nationally and regionally—and then rank them to provide the scientific basis for prioritizing actions. In TDA 1.0, the top four issues were identified through a

collaborative process involving all national teams. The point is not to address everything, but to ensure that choices are made based on evidence. Without that, we risk focusing on issues that may not be the most urgent or impactful. Dr. Somboon further explained that one of the key issues is the impact of fisheries on the marine environment and the sustainability of fisheries resources. Understanding these impacts is essential if we are to identify the most effective solutions or policy directions to mitigate them. This is why it's critical that the TDA includes a focused analysis on the exploitation of living aquatic resources. Without this, we risk overlooking one of the most significant pressures on marine ecosystems and missing the opportunity to shape informed, forward-looking management strategies.

60. Dr. Pei suggested three things on the TDA SAP approach. First is to look at how international conventions operate where countries are required to develop national action plans to fulfill global commitments. This model could inspire how we structure the TDA-SAP process, ensuring that national plans are clearly linked to regional and global frameworks. On the milestone sequence, he proposed that the regional SAP be endorsed first at the COBSEA IGM. Then, countries could integrate relevant goals and activities into their national action plans. This approach might better reflect how countries typically align national policies with international commitments. He also suggested to consider the national circumstances in terms of national planning processes. Integrating international and regional commitments into existing national plans is more practical than creating separate documents.

61. Dr. Tuan offered clarification on the approach and expressed support for Dr. Pei's suggestion. Some countries integrated their habitat-specific action plans into broader national biodiversity action plans. Actions related to coral reef management were incorporated into the national biodiversity conservation plan, eliminating the need for a separate ministerial endorsement. He emphasized that each component of the SCS SAP project has produced national action plans, which often go beyond the scope of national TDAs. While TDAs focus on transboundary issues, national action plans also address national priorities. Therefore, national TDAs can and should be integrated into broader national action planning frameworks. He suggested that the TDA team could assess how these activities are reflected in national plans and identify opportunities for better alignment moving forward.

62. Dr. McManus emphasized that incorporating the national TDA into existing national action plans is an excellent and evidence-based variant of the process. If elements of the TDA are already embedded in national policies, those components can be submitted as supporting documents to COBSEA. She reminded the group that the project document clearly states: if TDA-SAP elements are already integrated into national policies, then the project has effectively met its metric. This approach also demonstrates to COBSEA that the work is already embedded in national action, making it a strong case for endorsement. She noted that the current milestone sequence could be revised to reflect these variants.

63. The Chairperson expressed appreciation for the Steering Committee's comments and suggestions regarding the TDA SAP development and process. With no further remarks, the Steering Committee considered the progress and directed the PCU to take note of the comments and suggestions in the further TDA SAP development and process.

## **8. Presentation and Adoption of the Revised Overall Workplan and Budget for 2025-2026**

64. The Chairperson invited the Secretariat to present the draft proposed workplan and budget for 2025-2026, including future plans and activities. Mr. Poulsen began his presentation by reflecting on the retreat's key project outcomes: SEA:LEARN, SEA:STARS, SEA:PUFFER and the SCS SAP-COBSEA integration and cooperation, aside from the SAP implementation at the country level. These five areas now form the core focus of the project. He presented an illustration of alignments and interlinkages of the key deliverables with the three project components as follows:

- SAP implementation efforts in countries address a wide range of habitats under Component 1 and also support national and regional collaboration for tracking results.
- TDA SAP or SEA:STARS aligns with Component 2, with all its outcomes feeding directly into the TDA SAP process.

- SEA:LEARN spans both Component 1 and 2, which will serve as a knowledge management platform, capturing all national-level results and integrating them into a regional system.
- SEA:PUFFER financing mechanism is being developed under Component 3.
- Regional integration between SCS-SAP and COBSEA aligns with ongoing discussions on how to embed the SAP and TDA updates into broader regional efforts.

65. He explained that the SAP implementation at the national level feeds into the updates for the TDA and SAP, culminating in SEA:STARS by the end of 2026. All deliverables including SEA:LEARN and SEA:PUFFER are designed with the intention of being handed over to COBSEA for sustained implementation and regional integration. He then further explained the details and status of the five deliverables, particularly the knowledge management platform or SEA:LEARN, which is being developed. A concept note has already been drafted, outlining the principles for developing SEA:LEARN. The core intention is to build upon existing regional and national structures and platforms, rather than creating something that would replace them. It also aims to link with other organizations that have established knowledge management systems. The data generated from the TDA-SAP process is expected to feed into SEA:LEARN, helping it become a sustainable and enduring platform. On the financing mechanism or SEA:PUFFER, a concept note has also been developed, taking it on a phased approach, beginning with the disbursement of small grants to communities, and developing further SEA:PUFFER as financial mechanism, operating under the auspices of COBSEA. The target is to complete the deliverables in time for the COBSEA IGM in October 2026, including handing over the sustainability plan to COBSEA. To support this, there are ongoing efforts and collaborations with COBSEA such as the integration of regional working groups, and the establishment of a COBSEA Task Force that would identify ways to strengthen COBSEA.

66. Mr. Poulsen presented and emphasized the key purpose of the proposed work plan and budget revision covering the period 2025–2026, anchored around the five newly identified deliverables. The updated work plan reflects not only internal progress but also broader global and regional developments, such as the Global Biodiversity Framework which calls for stronger ecosystem conservation, particularly for coastal and marine environments. He emphasized the two points for discussion at the PSC as follows: 1) Proposed extension of the project until December 2027, as recommended in the mid-term review; and 2) Integration of the remaining funds from the Fisheries Refugia project into the current SCS SAP project. These unspent funds, which amount to approximately USD 450,000 is proposed to: Support the TDA-SAP process, Develop the SEA:LEARN platform, Conduct impact assessments at the local level (for both projects, Organize joint regional showcases highlighting the linkages between the two projects, and Host a joint end-of-project conference to present the consolidated results of the two projects.

67. In terms of financial adjustments, there is no change to the overall project budget approved in January 2024. However, internal restructuring has taken place to reflect the revised deliverables identified in October. These include increased allocation for technical personnel and savings from reduced operational costs. Additionally, due to the extended timeline, national coordinator contracts have also been extended—and this is accounted for in the new plan. In essence, the current work plan outlines activities through December 2026. Should the extension be approved, the PCU will prepare a further revised work plan and budget, incorporating the extra funds from the Fisheries Refugia project.

68. Mr. Ivan Pavletich provided further information on the project's financial status. He stated that following a slow initial rollout, the project saw a significant turnaround last year, thanks to a reinforced team and clearer prioritization. As of now, USD 6.2 million has been executed, which represents 43% of the total budget. This progress is encouraging, but it also presents a challenge—considering the volume of work and spending required in the remaining period. He noted that almost USD 300,000 was spent in the first quarter alone, and if the team aims to spend USD 3.5 million in 2025, it will require an intense and focused effort—further justifying the need for an extension.

69. In conclusion, Mr. Poulsen summarized the five key decisions being sought from the Steering Committee:

- Approval of the 2025–2026 work plan and revised budget
- Endorsement of project sustainability through COBSEA
- Agreement on the midterm review findings, including the proposed extension to December 2027
- Approval to merge the Fisheries Refugia budget with the SCS SAP project, contributing to SEA:LEARN, SEA:STARS, and SEA:PUFFER
- Endorsement of the TDA-SAP/SEA:STARS timeline

70. Following Mr. Poulsen presentation, the Chairperson opened the meeting for discussion. Mr. Ukkrit commented on the inclusion of the remaining funds from the Fisheries Refugia project into the SCS SAP subproject. He acknowledged that implementation at the Fisheries Refugia sites has already concluded and emphasized that, in his view, the remaining funds should not be used for further site-level implementation. Instead, he suggested that the funds could support knowledge sharing or similar strategic activities. In response, Dr. Somboon clarified that the remaining amount—approximately USD 452,000—is planned for transfer under the SCS SAP project with three proposed uses: 1) Impact Assessment: To study the impact of the Fisheries Refugia project, which ended two years ago, focusing on how the participating countries have implemented and sustained project outcomes. This will be a relatively low-cost activity; 2) Support for National TDA Processes: Funding could assist countries in developing national TDAs with a fisheries focus. Some countries have indicated a need for technical support, including hiring experts to draft their national TDAs related to the refugia approach; 3) Knowledge Sharing through SEA:LEARN: Lessons learned from the Fisheries Refugia project will be captured and shared via the SEA:LEARN platform. Based on discussions within the PCU and with national focal points, there's also recognition that some project sites have wrapped up activities and could benefit from continued support under SEA:LEARN, particularly where activities align with national priorities.

71. Dr. Tuan expanded and clarified that this provides strategic opportunity to provide additional support to SCS SAP project sites, particularly those that overlap with Fisheries Refugia sites. These areas are often critical for habitat conservation and serve as important nursery, spawning, or migratory routes for key species. The plan would be to identify 3–5 sites, across different countries, based on clear criteria such as transboundary relevance or dual-purpose conservation objectives. Should the additional funding be approved, a selection process would be conducted in coordination with national teams to identify the most appropriate sites for this targeted support at the local level.

72. Mr. Yu Yunjun expressed concerns regarding the proposed merging of the Fisheries Refugia project with the South China Sea (SCS) SAP implementation. He pointed out that China was not a participating country in the Fisheries Refugia project and therefore lacked insight into its design and activities. He was concerned that merging the two could add further complexity to an already complicated initiative. Additionally, he emphasized that when discussing habitats, broader ecosystem elements like mangroves, coastal wetlands, coral reefs, and seagrass meadows should also be considered, given their importance to fisheries. He questioned the rationale for integrating fisheries without a clear understanding of the project's substance. Mr. Yu suggested the need to prepare and share the rationale and workplan for integration in advance of the meeting to help the PSC members to review and prepare with ideas and inputs.

73. Ms. Vanderbeck provided clarification and explained that the original SAP included a fisheries component, but during its development, it was agreed that only artisanal fisheries would be addressed, partly due to China's reservations about broader fisheries discussions. The plan was for a single, unified project supported by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) with a total of USD 18 million. However, GEF treated the Fisheries Refugia initiative as a “proof of concept” that is valuable not just for this region, but globally. The SAP implementation was split into two linked but separate projects. Ms. Vanderbeck further explained that the remaining tasks for the Fisheries Refugia project focus on knowledge management, particularly developing a “how-to” guide on establishing and scaling up fisheries refugia. This codified knowledge is intended to feed into the SEA:LEARN platform and support other countries inside and outside the region. The goal of merging the Fisheries Refugia project

with the SCS SAP implementation is to allow the USD 450,000 remaining funds to support broader knowledge-sharing and sustainability efforts under COBSEA, rather than returning the money to GEF.

74. Mr. Poulsen responded on concerns about integrating the Fisheries Refugia project into the South China Sea SAP project by emphasizing the strong alignment and potential synergies between the two. He explained that the refugia approach is essentially a fisheries management strategy rooted in habitat conservation, which aligns well with the SAP project's focus at site level. Many of the sites from both projects even overlap, reinforcing the complementary nature of their objectives. The integration is already mandated in the project document. He clarified that whether or not the additional budget from the refugia project is approved, the integration must go ahead. However, securing those funds would allow the project team to reallocate existing resources to other priorities. Should the Steering Committee approve the proposed transfer of funds, a more detailed activity plan will be developed and submitted for formal PSC approval as these activities are not yet covered under the current work plan.

75. Mr. Bodunescu added his endorsement, framing the opportunity as a strategic and timely benefit to the SCS SAP project. He emphasized that this is not a continuation or merging of the two projects. The Fisheries Refugia initiative has concluded, and the remaining funds are leftover resources that could be redeployed effectively. From his perspective, the proposal is fully aligned with the SAP project's goals and should be seen as a helpful boost to the project.

76. Mr. Trono expressed strong support for integrating the remaining Fisheries Refugia funds into ongoing country-level activities. He requested clarification on the process—specifically, whether countries would be required to submit proposals and budgets to access these funds. He suggested to come up with a simple set of criteria to guide countries in submitting activity proposals to the PCU. He shared specific ideas for such criteria such as: Activities should ideally take place in sites where past interventions under the SCS SAP or Fisheries Refugia project have occurred; Proposals could focus on addressing land-based pollution issues impacting refugia sites—for example, interventions like green filters to mitigate pollution; and Activities that support economic valuation of refugia could be prioritized. This would allow the project to generate tangible evidence of the ecological and economic benefits of refugia sites—strengthening the justification for integrating funds.

77. Mr. Ukkrit acknowledged the value in utilizing the remaining Fisheries Refugia funds, but recommended that the PCU prepare a clear set of bullet points outlining the specific types of activities the funds would support. He noted that having this list would make it easier for the Steering Committee to consider and approve the proposal. He proposed that potential activities might include: Knowledge management, particularly the compilation and dissemination of good practices and lessons learned from the Fisheries Refugia project. These outputs could benefit not only participating countries but also others in the region; An assessment of the overall success and long-term impact of the Fisheries Refugia initiative, since the project ended some time ago. This could identify achievements, challenges, and opportunities for next steps; and Possibly capacity-building and training activities, depending on assessed needs and alignment with the project objectives.

78. Ms. Vanderbeck emphasized that the intention is not to restart or duplicate the Fisheries Refugia project within the SCS SAP initiative. Instead, the goal is to incorporate the knowledge, tools, and experience from the Refugia project into the broader TDA-SAP process, amplifying its impact and value. She stressed that countries can benefit from state-of-the-art guidance and resources developed under the Refugia project. Activities such as impact assessments, economic evaluations, and documentation of lessons learned can deepen the collective understanding of fisheries management and inform the design of more robust SAP actions for fisheries. By integrating this knowledge, the region's SAP actions on fisheries can be more comprehensive and grounded in practical experience. And through platforms like SEA:LEARN, this learning can reach a broader audience, including countries not originally involved in the Refugia project.

79. Dr. Somboon outlined the proposed activities for using the remaining Refugia project funds, highlighting that these plans have been developed internally and are now being shared for Steering

Committee consideration. The suggested uses include: Impact Review: Conduct a study on how participating countries implemented the Refugia model and what results have been sustained since the project ended in 2022; Knowledge Sharing: Compile and disseminate key lessons and good practices through SEA:LEARN, and organize a showcase of outcomes at a future SCS SAP Implementation meeting; National TDA Support: Assist countries in drafting national TDAs focused on fisheries by funding local consultants; Support for Overlapping Sites: Provide targeted assistance for sites where Refugia areas overlap with current SCS SAP habitats—particularly where communities have expressed a continued need for support; Terminal Evaluation: Allocate funds for a formal terminal evaluation of the Refugia project; and Administrative Reporting: Prepare any final administrative and financial documentation required to close the project formally. Dr. Somboon added that, should the integration be approved, the PCU will coordinate with countries to confirm the criteria and national priorities and prepare a detailed implementation plan and schedule that aligns with the broader SAP objectives.

80. Mr. Ukkrit raised an important point about the project termination and budget timeline. He questioned whether the Steering Committee had already formally adopted December 2027 as the project end date. Without such endorsement, he noted that approving a budget and work plan only up to 2026 implies a two-year period rather than a full extension to 2027. He suggested that, if the project is intended to run through 2027, the budget lines should explicitly reflect the 2025–2027 period. Mr. Poulsen clarified that the current Steering Committee meeting is only being asked to approve the work plan up to the end of 2026. If the committee also agrees to the project extension to December 2027 and the integration of the Fisheries Refugia funds, the PCU will revise and develop a supplemental work plan and budget covering the additional year and will be submitted for PSC approval. He further clarified that the current PCAs need not be amended in view of the proposed extension of the project beyond 2026. He stressed that PCAs do not necessarily need to mirror the overall project timeline. Ms. Vanderbeck clarified that the decision-making before the committee includes three key elements: 1) Endorsement of the 2025–2026 work plan and budget, 2) Agreement in principle on the extension to 2027, contingent on the midterm review recommendation, and 3) Consent to merge the Fisheries Refugia project with the current SCS SAP project. She explained that since these elements were still pending formal endorsement, the PCU has not yet finalized the 2027 work plan. Once those approvals are granted, the PCU will prepare the extended plan and share it with the committee for review via a no-objection process, allowing members to provide feedback and confirm consensus.

81. With no further comments, the Steering Committee endorsed and approved the proposed workplan for 2025-2026, including the plans and activities of the SCS SAP Project, and directed the PCU to take note and execute the comments and suggestions of the Steering Committee for immediate implementation.

## **9. Project Steering Committee Decisions**

82. The Chairperson invited the Secretariat to present the draft meeting recommendations and next steps. Mr. Reynaldo Molina presented the draft meeting recommendations and next steps. Following the discussions, the Steering Committee agreed on the following:

### **On the Workplan and Budget**

- PSC agreed to integrate and use the FR funds. PCU to develop criteria in identifying activities to be supported by the FR funds – priority are sites where both SCS and FR overlaps to clarify and justify the integration of FR funds.
- PCU to prepare a more detailed plan of activities, which will be integrated with the revised work plan and budget until December 2027 (see below). Start with the initial activities and plans prepared by Dr. Somboon. Consider the planned extension in developing the activities.
- PSC agreed to extend the project until December 2027 with full consideration of existing timeline of the cooperation agreements (PCAs/GSAs).
- PCU to work on the revision of workplan and budget until December 2027. PCU to circulate to PSC the revised workplan and budget for no objection approval.

- PSC approved the revised workplan and budget for 2025-2026

#### On the TDA/SAP Process

- PSC to consider ministerial endorsement of the national TDA through other approaches/means like existing national action plans, strategies
- Workplan for finalization of SAP to be completed following COBSEA timeline – IGM on Oct 2026. Refer to TDA/SAP workplan and timeline/calendar

#### On the MTR Recommendations

- PSC considered and endorsed, in principle, the findings and recommendations.

83. The Steering Committee directed the PCU to prepare and coordinate the necessary arrangements and documentations with UNEP, UNOPS and regional and national implementing partners, and project consultants.

### 10. Any Other Business

84. The Chairperson invited the Steering Committee members to consider and discuss any items of business introduced under agenda item 3 including the selection of the next meeting host. There was no other agenda introduced and discussed under agenda item 3.

85. For the next host of the meeting, Vietnam volunteered to host the Fourth PSC Meeting subject to their internal consultation and administrative approval of the ministry. If approved, Vietnam needs an official letter from UNOPS as host for the next meeting.

### 11. Closure of the Meeting

86. The Chairperson called for a formal motion to close the meeting. Mr. Poulsen expressed his sincere thanks to all Steering Committee members for their active participation and constructive engagement throughout the meeting. He noted that the diverse discussions and thoughtful inputs led to the endorsement or approval of all key agenda points. He emphasized that while the Steering Committee has endorsed the possibility of a project extension, this does not automatically finalize it. The actual extension will be contingent on the development of a comprehensive, well-reasoned work plan, which the PCU will now begin drafting. He acknowledged the important role Ms. Vanderbeck will play in navigating the necessary processes and assured the group that the PCU would provide full support. He ended by reaffirming appreciation for everyone's contributions and said the team looks forward to reconvening in Vietnam in 2026. He thanked the committee once again for a productive and forward-looking meeting.

87. Mr. Budonescu expressed his appreciation for the constructive and forward-looking mindset evident throughout the meeting. He noted that the discussions reflected a clear sense that the project is now approaching its final stages, and that the direction being charted is both coherent and promising. He commended the evolving clarity around next steps and voiced his full confidence in the PCU's ability to transform shared ideas into a practical and strategic final-phase work plan. Dan reiterated his support for this critical phase of conceptualization and implementation, and acknowledged the Steering Committee's openness and collaborative spirit. He concluded by saying how insightful and enriching the two days of discussion had been for him personally, and thanked all participants for their contributions.

88. Ms. Vanderbeck extended heartfelt thanks to all participants, emphasizing that this is a truly exciting time for the region. She shared her personal enthusiasm for the SEA mechanisms—SEA:STARS, SEA:LEARN, and SEA:PUFFER—and expressed confidence in their potential to become powerful tools if they are fully completed and implemented. She reflected on the importance

of the October retreat, noting how instrumental those conversations were in clarifying the project's direction and generating shared vision. Isabelle thanked the Steering Committee for their energy, dedication, and collaborative spirit, and assured everyone that the UNEP side will continue working to secure the necessary extensions and resources to bring the shared ambitions to full fruition.

87. The Chairperson, Mr. Meas Rithy of Cambodia, expressed his sincere appreciation to the organization of the Third PSC Steering Committee Meeting in Manila. This has been a productive and meaningful gathering, and we are grateful to all of you for your active participation and support. He thanked the Philippines for hosting the meeting, for the warm hospitality, and excellent organization of the event. He thanked the members of the Steering Committee for their hard work and dedication in guiding the participating countries and helping shape the way forward. He extended his sincere appreciation to UNEP, UNOPS and PCU for their unwavering support in facilitating this process. He acknowledged with appreciation the contributions of all participating countries currently on board, and look forward to welcoming Vietnam and Indonesia more formally as they finalize and implement their agreements. Today's discussions were rich and constructive, resulting in the approval in principle of the work plan and budget and endorsement of a possible project extension to 2027. These decisions represent important milestones for our collective journey. Finally, to all delegates, he expressed his thanks for the strong engagement and valuable insights throughout the sessions. We wish everyone safe travels back home.

88. The Chairperson declared the meeting closed at 1200 hours Indochina time.

## **ANNEXES**

Annex 1. Annotated Agenda

Annex 2. List of Participants

Annex 3. List of Documents

Annex 4. Overall Workplan

Annex 5. Budget

## Annex 1. Annotated Agenda

### Day 1, 7 May 2025, 09.00 – 16.30

08.50 – 09.00 Security Briefing

#### 1. Opening of the Meeting

09.00 – 09.20 1.1. Welcome address

- Welcome remark by the Representative of the Host Country
- Opening and welcome address by the Task Manager of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
- Welcome remark by the Representative of the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)

The Secretariat will invite to deliver the welcome and opening remarks: Representative of the host country; Ms. Isabelle Vanderbeck, UNEP Task Manager as implementing agency to open the meeting on behalf of the Executive Director of UNEP; Mr. Dan Bodunescu, UNOPS Programme Management Specialist as the executing agency to give the welcome remark.

09.20 – 09:30 1.2. Introduction of members

The Secretariat will introduce the members of the Project Steering Committee and other participants.

09.30 – 10.00 1.3 Opening statements by the Chairs of the National Inter-Ministry Committees (IMC)

The Secretariat will invite the National Focal Points and Inter-Ministry Committee Chairpersons of participating countries to give an opening statement.

#### 2. Organisation of the Meeting

10.00 – 10.10 2.1. Designation of officers

In accordance with the rules of procedure for the Project Steering Committee Meeting, participants will be invited by the Secretariat to elect a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Rapporteur. The Secretariat will remind the members that the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Rapporteur shall hold office until the subsequent meeting of the Project Steering Committee and shall be eligible for re-election no more than once.

In the second PSC meeting in January 2024, the following members were elected:

- Chairperson: Thailand represented by Mr. Ukkrit Satapoomin
- Vice-Chairperson: Cambodia represented by Mr. Meas Rithy
- Rapporteur: China represented by Mr. Yu Yunjun

The Secretariat will invite members for nominations.

10.10 – 10.20 2.2. Organisation of work

The Chairperson will invite the Secretariat to brief participants on the proposed organisation of work, the list of documents available to the meeting and administrative arrangements for the conduct of the meeting. The meeting will be conducted in plenary and in English.

10.20 – 10.30 **3. Adoption of the Meeting Agenda**

The Chairperson will invite participants to consider the draft agenda and annotated agenda prepared by the Secretariat as documents SCSSAP PSC.3/1 and SCSSAP PSC.3/2, propose any amendments or additional items for consideration, and adopt the agenda.

10.30 – 10.45 ***Break and Group Photo***

10.45 – 11.45 **4. Report on National Activities to Implement the SCS SAP Project**

The Chairperson will invite the National Technical Focal Points and National Technical Working Group Chairpersons of participating countries to present their national activities (document SCSSAP PSC.3/4) to implement the SCS SAP Project, following a template prepared and circulated by the Secretariat. The Committee is invited to review, provide comments and suggestions and consider the national activities reported.

11.45 – 12.00 **5. Report on Regional Activities to Implement the SCS SAP Project**

The Chairperson will invite the Secretariat to introduce document SCSSAP PSC.3/3: Report on Status and Progress of the SCS SAP Project from inception to present, and plans for 2025 and onwards. The Steering Committee is invited to review, provide comments and suggestions and consider the regional activities reported.

12.00 – 13.30 ***Lunch Break***

13.30 – 14.30 **6. Presentation and Discussion of the Findings and Recommendations of the Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the SCS SAP Project**

The Chairperson will invite the Secretariat to introduce the Mid-Term Review Consultant to present document SCSSAP PSC.3/5: Findings and Recommendations of the Mid-Term Review of the SCS-SAP Project. The Committee is invited to review, provide comments and consider the MTR findings and recommendations.

14.30 – 15.30 **7. Presentation and Discussion on the Implementation and Progress of the Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis/Strategic Action Programme (TDA/SAP) Process**

The Chairperson will invite the Secretariat to introduce the TDA/SAP Lead Consultant to present document SCSSAP PSC.3/6: Implementation and Progress of the Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) and the Strategic Action Programme (SAP) development and updating process. The Committee is invited to review, provide comments and suggestions and consider the process on the development and updating of the TDA and SAP.

15.30 – 15.45 ***Break***

15.45– 16.30 **8. Presentation and Adoption of the Revised Overall Workplan and Budget for 2025-2026**

The Chairperson will invite the Secretariat to present the draft proposed workplan and budget for 2025-2026, presented in document SCSSAP PSC.3/7, including future plans and activities. The Chairperson will invite members to discuss, amend and approve the proposed workplan for 2025-2026 and future plans and activities.

**Day 2, 8 May 2025, 09.00 – 18.00**

09.00 – 10.00 **8. Continuation of Discussion and Adoption of the Revised Overall Workplan and Budget for 2025-2026**

The Chairperson will invite the members for comments on the proposed workplan and budget for 2025-2026 presented by the Secretariat. The Chairperson will invite members to approve the proposed workplan for 2025-2026 and future plans and activities.

10.00 – 11.00 **9. Execution Arrangements and Next Steps including agreement on next SC venue and date**

The Chairperson will invite the Secretariat to present the arrangements and next steps of the Steering Committee towards execution of project activities, including the venue and date of the next meeting of the Steering Committee.

11.00 – 11.15 ***Break***

11.15 – 11.30 **10. Any Other Business**

The Chairperson will invite members to consider and discuss any items of business introduced under agenda item 3.

11.30 – 12.00 **11. Closure of the Meeting**

The Chairperson will call for a formal motion to close the meeting.

12.00 – 13.00 ***Lunch Break***

13.00 – 18.00 **Field/Site Visit** (Details and itinerary to be provided later)

## Annex 2. List of Participants

### PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE (PSC) MEMBERS

#### Cambodia

*National Inter-Ministry Committee Chair*

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*National Inter-Ministry Committee Chair*

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*National Technical Working Group Chair*

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*National Technical Working Group Chair*

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*National Technical Working Group Chair*

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## Annex 3. List of Documents

### Meeting documents

The Project Steering Committee (PSC) members are required to review these documents with the aim to adopt during the 3<sup>rd</sup> Steering Committee meeting.

SCSSAP PSC.3/1	Provisional Agenda
SCSSAP PSC.3/2	Annotated Provisional Agenda
SCSSAP PSC.3/3	Report on Status and Progress of the SCS SAP Project
SCSSAP PSC.3/4	Reports on National Activities to Implement the SCS SAP Project
SCSSAP PSC.3/5	Draft Final Report of the Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the SCS-SAP Project
SCSSAP PSC.3/6	Implementation and Progress of the Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) and the Strategic Action Programme (SAP) Development and Updating Process
SCSSAP PSC.3/7	Draft Proposed Overall Workplan and Budget for 2025-2026
SCSSAP PSC.3/8	Report of the Meeting (to be prepared following the meeting)

### Information documents

SCSSAP PSC.3/Inf.1	Provisional list of documents (this document)
SCSSAP PSC.3/Inf.2	Draft List of Participants
SCSSAP PSC.3/Inf.3	Report on Habitats and Land-Based Pollution Achievements in Implementing the SAP at the National Level During 2008-2021
SCSSAP PSC.3/Inf.4	Good Practices on Habitat and Land-Based Pollution Management

### Reference documents

	SCS SAP Full Project Document
	SCS Strategic Action Programme
SCSSAP IP.1/4	1 <sup>st</sup> Regional Inception Phase Meeting Report
SCSSAP IP.2/5	2 <sup>nd</sup> Regional Inception Phase Meeting Report
SCSSAP IP.3/5	3 <sup>rd</sup> Regional Inception Phase Meeting – NIR Development and Completion
SCSSAP PSC.1/9	Project Steering Committee Meeting Report
SCSSAP IW/3	SCS SAP Inception Meeting Report
SCSSAP RWG-M.1/6	First Meeting of the Regional Working Group on Mangroves Report
SCSSAP RWG-CR.1/6	First Meeting of the Regional Working Group on Coral Reefs Report
SCSSAP RWG-SG.1/6	First Meeting of the Regional Working Group on Seagrass Report
SCSSAP RWG-W.1/6	First Meeting of the Regional Working Group on Wetlands Report

SCSSAP RWG-RSTC.1/11	First Meeting of the Regional Scientific and Technical Committee Report
SCSSAP RWG-LBP.1/6	First Meeting of the Regional Working Group on Land-Based Pollution Report
SCSSAP RWG-EV.1/6	First Meeting of the Regional Task Force on Economic Valuation Report
SCSSAP PSC.2/8	Second Project Steering Committee Meeting Report
SCSSAP RWG-RSTC.2/9	Second Meeting of the Regional Scientific and Technical Committee Report
SCSSAP RWG-LBP.2/6	Second Meeting of the Regional Working Group on Land-Based Pollution Report



Outputs	Activities and Deliverables	Delivery Date and Timeframe							
		2025				2026			
		1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
1.2.4 Established mechanism for monitoring management, ecological and socio-economic indicators at 46 sites [based on SAP results framework]	Reporting of SAP implementation achievement and progress in each coral reef site.								
	Finalize the mechanism framework (agreed indicators, data availability and gaps, etc) for monitoring and reporting of SAP implementation achievement and progress in each coral reef site.								
<b>Outcome 1.3 Conservation, management and sustainable use of 26,036 ha of known seagrass area in the South China Sea</b>									
1.3.1 Twenty-one seagrass areas totaling 15,848 ha under sustainable management with supporting laws and regulations	Implement the seagrass workplan and activities as per signed PCA/GSA with Cambodia, China, Thailand and Philippines								
1.3.2 Amended management plans for 7 existing MPAs with significant seagrass areas, to include specific seagrass-related management actions and policy, legal & institutional reforms	Finalize and sign the PCA/GSA seagrass workplan and activities for Indonesia and Vietnam								
1.3.3 Designation of 7 new Marine Protected Areas focusing on seagrass areas identified in the prioritized listings of the SCS Project	Implement the seagrass workplan and activities as per signed PCA/GSA with Indonesia and Vietnam								
1.3.4 Established mechanism for monitoring management, ecological and socio-economic indicators at 20 sites [based on SAP results framework]	Reporting of SAP implementation achievement and progress in each seagrass site.								
	Finalize the mechanism framework (agreed indicators, data availability and gaps, etc) for monitoring and reporting of SAP implementation achievement and progress in each seagrass site.								
<b>Outcome 1.4 Integrated management of 813,647 ha of coastal wetland at 19 sites, including habitat restoration and protection strengthened at priority locations</b>									
1.4.1 Integrated management plans developed and under implementation for at least 3 lagoons 9 estuaries, 5 tidal flats, 1 peat swamp and 1 non-peat swamp and associated policy, legal & institutional reforms	Implement the wetland workplan and activities as per signed PCA/GSA with Cambodia, China, Thailand and Philippines								
1.4.2 Declaration of at least 7 wetland areas with protection status (i.e. non-hunting area, nature reserves, protected areas, Ramsar Sites).	Finalize and sign the PCA/GSA wetland workplan and activities for Indonesia and Vietnam								

Outputs	Activities and Deliverables	Delivery Date and Timeframe							
		2025				2026			
		1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
	Implement the wetland workplan and activities as per signed PCA/GSA with Indonesia and Vietnam								
1.4.3 Adoption of a regional estuary monitoring scheme and its national implementation [based on SAP results framework]	Reporting of SAP implementation achievement and progress in each wetland site.								
	Finalize the mechanism framework (agreed indicators, data availability and gaps, etc) for monitoring and reporting of SAP implementation achievement and progress in each wetland site.								
<b>Outcome 1.5 National and regional level cooperation in tracking results of SAP actions for coastal habitat management</b>									
1.5.1 National committees and regional networks of habitat specialists established under the SCS project revitalized and functioning	Establish and convene the National Committees/ Working Groups (on mangroves, coral reefs, seagrass, wetlands and land-based pollution). (NOTE: Cambodia, China, Thailand - DONE; Indonesia, Philippines, Viet Nam - TBE)								
	Establish Regional Working Groups - DONE (With Output 3.1.1)								
1.5.2 Mechanism to monitor and evaluate the impacts of SAP implementation and achievement of habitat targets operational [including agreement on standardized methods and guidelines for inventory and assessment]	Finalize and implement the mechanism framework (agreement on standardized methods and guidelines for inventory and assessment) for monitoring, evaluation and reporting of SAP implementation achievement and progress of habitat targets. (NOTE: Cambodia, China, Thailand - ongoing)								
1.5.3 Community leaders, local government, and civil society from priority habitat sites networked to foster cooperation and knowledge sharing on achievements and best practices	Prepare report on best-practices and disseminate to countries for additional inputs. Finalize and publish the report on best practices on habitat and land-based pollution management and fishery refugia. (With SEA:LEARN)								
	Organize national and regional round-table meetings on best practices (NOTE: Back-to back with NTWG or National Committees/Working Groups meetings)								

Outputs	Activities and Deliverables	Delivery Date and Timeframe							
		2025				2026			
		1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
	Establishment of the Regional Network of MPA Networks (With Output 3.5.2)								
1.5.4 Progress and status report of regional and national SAP implementation	Prepare report on SAP implementation progress at regional and national levels, based on inputs from each country. - DONE								
	Finalize and publish the national reports on SAP implementation achievements of targets and outputs from 2008-2021 - Almost DONE								
	Finalize and publish the updated National Implementation Reports								
<b>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</b>									
<b>Outcome 2.1 Enhanced information-base for coastal habitat management, monitoring and action planning</b>									
2.1.1 Assessment of existing data and information on coastal habitat in the South China Sea, and review of monitoring and assessment approaches that can support SCS monitoring program, from national, regional and global sources, combined with project-generated data from Component 1	Assessment of existing data and information on coastal habitats, including on Blue Economy * GIS data * Database * Partnerships * Gaps and capacity needs * Remote sensing algorithms (With SEA: LEARN and TDA-SAP Process)								
2.1.2 Mechanism for collection and exchange of regional coastal habitat and pollution information and data established	<b>Development of SEA: LEARN</b> * Regional and global partnership * Data as in Outputs 2.1.1, 2.2.1, 2.2.2, 2.3.1, 2.4.1, 2.4.2 * Incorporate requirements from Outputs 1.5.3, 2.5.1, 2.5.2, 3.1.2, 3.4.1, 3.4.2, 3.4.3, and 3.4.4								
<b>Outcome 2.2 Effective integration of regional science in the management of land-based pollution</b>									
2.2.1 Regional level assessment of sources, flows, and impacts of marine pollution (incl. from coastal aquaculture): Support national surveys using recommended	Assessment of existing data and information on land-based pollution (With SEA: LEARN and TDA-SAP Process)								

Outputs	Activities and Deliverables	Delivery Date and Timeframe							
		2025				2026			
		1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
approaches and applying training to establish baselines and inform a regional assessment (TDA)									
2.2.2 Quantification of effluent volumes and contaminant loadings from coastal aquaculture to the SCS marine basin	Effluent from aquaculture and mariculture operations identified as key threat to dominant coastal biomes; Quantification of effluent volumes and contaminant loadings from coastal aquaculture (with SEA: LEARN and TDA-SAP Process)								
<b>Outcome 2.3 Strengthened and harmonized national policies and laws, and supporting financial mechanism, for the management of habitats and land-based sources of pollution</b>									
2.3.1 National best practices in managing land-based sources of pollution documented and shared.	Publish best practices in managing land-based sources of pollution (With SEA: LEARN and TDA-SAP)								
2.3.2 Increase policy coherence on addressing land-based pollution in participating countries	Review of legislative and institutional frameworks for land-based pollution and habitat management in participating countries (With TDA-SAP)								
	Key principles agreed for harmonized national procedures for land-based pollution management (With TDA-SAP)								
	Support to countries in revising national/provincial policies and supporting regulations for land-based pollution and habitats (w/ TDA-SAP)								
<b>Outcome 2.4 Updated Total Economic Values of coastal habitats for use in development planning and decision-making and blue economy</b>									
2.4.1 Expanded datasets and estimates of economic valuation information on the goods and services of SCS coastal ecosystems	Establish the Regional Task Force on Economic Valuation and organize meetings - DONE								
	Update the Economic Valuation carried out under Phase 1 (2002-2008) to include new data from the region, considering TEEB methodologies, blue economies, and blue carbon. (With SEA:LEARN and TDA-SAP)								

Outputs	Activities and Deliverables	Delivery Date and Timeframe							
		2025				2026			
		1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
2.4.2 Compilation of good examples, and identify recommendations to strengthen a blue economy (and circular economy) approach and innovative financing for pollution and habitat management, including private sector engagement.	Green Fins National Workshop (February 2025; Jakarta) Green Fins Regional Workshop (2026) Fisheries Refugia Regional Workshop (2026) (With SEA:LEARN and TDA-SAP)								
	Documentation of good examples on blue economy to be reflected in the SAP								
<b>Outcome 2.5 Regionally appropriate tools and mechanisms to guide the development of sustainable management systems for coastal habitats and land-based pollution</b>									
2.5.1 Online catalogue of best practice management measures and technologies for sustainable use of SCS coastal habitats and land-based pollution management	With SEA: LEARN; Output 2.1.2								
2.5.2 Regional networking, training, study tours, and exchange on habitat and land-based pollution management	Regional Collaborative Networks (With SEA: LEARN and Output 3.5.2)								
<b>Outcome 2.6 Updated and Ministerially adopted Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis and Strategic Action Programme, including prioritization of national management actions to address climate variability and change</b>									
2.6.1 National and regional level consensus on contemporary issues and problems and updated TDA	<b>TDA-SAP Updating (SEA STAR)</b> * Incorporate Outputs 1.5.4, 2.1.1, 2.2.1, 2.2.2, 2.3.1, 2.3.2, 2.4.1, 2.4.2 (Feed into the PEMSEA report)								
2.6.2 National and regional consultative process to develop updated Strategic Action Programme SAP for adoption at the Ministerial level including agreed monitoring and reporting mechanisms	Revise and update SAP based on the guidelines developed, incorporating other elements and emerging issues								
2.6.3 Prioritization of national management actions for incorporation into national policies and plans, in particular for climate variability and change and blue economy	Review and recommend national management actions and priorities for SAP implementation and incorporation in national plans								
2.6.4 Updated and adopted National Action Plans for mangroves, coral reefs, seagrass and wetlands, and land-based pollution including enactment of supporting legislation where required	Update National Action Plans for habitats, land-based pollution, economic valuation, climate change etc								
<b>Component 3. Facilitating regional and national level integration and cooperation for implementation of the South China Sea Strategic Action Programme</b>									

Outputs	Activities and Deliverables	Delivery Date and Timeframe							
		2025				2026			
		1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
<b>Outcome 3.1 Regional and sub-regional co-operation in the integration of scientific knowledge and research outputs with management and policy making</b>									
3.1.1 Regional Committees and Working Groups functioning as a bridge between the scientific community and decision-makers.	Organize Regional Meetings * RWG (Habitats and LBP) * RSTC * RTF (Economic Valuation and Legal Matters) * PSC (Meeting 2025 (May, Manila, Philippines)) (With Output 1.5.1)								
3.1.2 Knowledge and best practices exchanges between governments, scientific community, coastal managers, youth, and relevant organizations through Regional Conferences and Workshops	Organize the Regional Scientific Conference (RSC) and Workshops * IOC/WESTPAC - DONE * IWC10 - DONE * EAS Congress - DONE * Seagrass (Feb 2025) * PEMSEA Network on Local Governments (With SEA: LEARN)								
	Operational award program on best practices in coastal habitat and land-based pollution management for communities, local governments and industry (NOTE: SCS-SAP KU Partnership - Learning exchange, innovation, etc), (With SEA PUFFER, Output 3.2.1)								
3.1.3 Memoranda of Agreement for joint management of at least two (2) priority transboundary water areas agreed & implemented	Seagrass / Dugong Initiative and Cambodia - Viet Nam Transboundary Project								
	Marine Ecotourism Standards across turtle migration tourism sites								
3.1.4 Integration and cooperation of the GEF/UNEP fisheries refugia project results and relevant regional initiatives.	Implementation of the Fisheries Refugia Workplan								
	Cooperation with other regional initiatives: * Cambodia - Building Resilience of Cambodian Communities and Promoting Diversified Livelihood								

Outputs	Activities and Deliverables	Delivery Date and Timeframe							
		2025				2026			
		1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
	Project * Thailand - Seeding nutrients pollution reduction strategy in the coastal waters of Thailand								
<b>Outcome 3.2 Relationships between central and local governments and the private sector strengthened and formalized</b>									
3.2.1 Identification and development of blue finance opportunities for private sector investment (e.g. fisheries, tourism, others) in implementation of the updated SAP	Identification of options for regional financial mechanism for land-based pollution and habitat management including options for implementation of National Action Plans (NAPs)								
	Development of regional financing facility (SEA PUFFER) (With Output 2.4.2)								
3.2.3 Public-private partnerships and investment plan for the implementation of the updated SAP solidified through two blue economy partnership forums	IOC-WESTPAC Special Forum on Blue Economy - DONE Marine Ecotourism Regional Workshop (2026)								
<b>Outcome 3.3 Capacity for civil society and community organization participation in SAP implementation strengthened via operationalization of the financing mechanism. operational partnership with GEF SGP</b>									
3.3.1 Implementation of the financing facility to support community-based projects for SAP implementation	Concept Note, including criteria, on the financing facility grant mechanism (With SEA PUFFER, Output 3.2.1)								
	Pilot of community-based projects financed through the facility (With SEA PUFFER, Output 3.2.1)								
3.3.2 Training program on science and management of coastal habitats and resources for community-based project recipients	Organize training programs for financing facility recipients  (With SEA PUFFER, Output 3.2.1)								
<b>Outcome 3.4 Revitalization of regional mechanisms for communications, knowledge exchange, and information and data management and sharing</b>									
3.4.1 A variety of multi-media information and knowledge products based on SCS SAP implementation communications strategy	With SEA: LEARN, Output 2.1.2								
3.4.2 Regionally appropriate knowledge tools developed to support decision-making and planning.	With SEA: LEARN, Output 2.1.2								

Outputs	Activities and Deliverables	Delivery Date and Timeframe							
		2025				2026			
		1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
3.4.3 The SCS project web portal and clearing house mechanism and associated regional databases online, updated and linked to IW-Learn and other GEF Knowledge management systems	With SEA: LEARN, Output 2.1.2								
3.4.4 Active engagement with GEF IW:LEARN [1% of project resources] including participation in IW conferences and 3 experience notes	With SEA: LEARN, Output 2.1.2								
<b>Outcome 3.5 Agreed arrangements for strengthened regional cooperation in the management of the marine and coastal environment of the South China Sea</b>									
3.5.1 Options for future regional sustainability and governance identified	Establishment and Organization of Regional Task Force on Sustainability and Governance								
	National stakeholder consultations on draft options paper for regional cooperation and governance								
	Develop Options Paper on Regional Sustainability and Governance								
3.5.2 Strengthen regional collaborative network composed of different agencies and governments.	Integration of the RWG on Habitats with the WGMCE Proposed Regional Collaborative Mechanism IWC10 - DONE EAS Congress - DONE Our Ocean Conference UN Ocean Conference (With Outputs 1.5.3 and 2.5.2)								

## Annex 5. Budget

### SCSSAP Budget Revision: Breakdown by Component

UNEP Budget Line		I	II	III	PMC	M&E	TOTAL
<b>010</b>	<b>Staff &amp; Personnel (Including Consultants)</b>						
1101	Senior Project Manager	114,258	148,210	152,345	304,689	76,172	<b>795,675</b>
1102	Project Management Support Specialist (Country Coordinator)	335,976	122,173	103,575		64,723	<b>626,447</b>
1103	Scientific Coordinator	196,519	159,129	144,865			<b>500,513</b>
1104	Communications / Technical Support Officer	15,000	15,000	40,980	41,000		<b>111,980</b>
1105	Project Support Officer			30,083	187,535	25,861	<b>243,479</b>
1106	Technical Specialist	12,912	116,209	103,297		25,824	<b>258,243</b>
1107	Administrative Assistant			30,500	87,170	10,530	<b>128,200</b>
1108	Travel and Events Assistant			23,200	34,800		<b>58,000</b>
	<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>674,666</b>	<b>560,722</b>	<b>628,844</b>	<b>655,194</b>	<b>203,111</b>	<b>2,722,537</b>
1201	Inception Phase Consultants (R.Molina & V.Hart)	83,687	41,843	41,843			<b>167,373</b>
1202	NIR Consultants (Vietnam, Philippines and Regional)	79,339	9,917	9,917			<b>99,174</b>
1206	Thematic regional and national consultants	562,216	374,811	312,342			<b>1,249,369</b>
1207	Consultants others (Economic valuation, Financing, TDA/SAP, Governance)	28,845	48,075	115,380			<b>192,300</b>
1220	Evaluator (Mid-term)					30,000	<b>30,000</b>
1221	Evaluator (Terminal)					40,000	<b>40,000</b>
	<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>754,087</b>	<b>474,646</b>	<b>479,483</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>70,000</b>	<b>1,778,216</b>
<b>120</b>	<b>Contract Services</b>						
2302	Meeting venues	35,297	35,297	35,297			<b>105,891</b>
2303	Translation services	3,333	3,333	3,333			<b>10,000</b>
2304	Printing, design and communication product services	20,743	20,743	20,743			<b>62,229</b>
2305	Audits				12,000		<b>12,000</b>
2306	Website, database, online reporting and GIS services	16,941	16,941	16,941			<b>50,823</b>
	<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>76,314</b>	<b>76,314</b>	<b>76,314</b>	<b>12,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>240,943</b>

UNEP Budget Line		I	II	III	PMC	M&E	TOTAL
<b>125</b>	<b>Operating and Other Costs</b>						
4301	Premise Rent	15,384	15,384	16,024			46,792
5101	UNOPS Operating costs (ex 1204 & 2204 BL)	681,578	596,381	425,986			1,703,945
	<i>Sub-total</i>	<b>696,962</b>	<b>611,765</b>	<b>442,010</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,750,737</b>
<b>130</b>	<b>Supplies, Commodities and Materials</b>						
4101	Office Supplies	5,808	5,808	5,808			17,424
	<i>Sub-total</i>	<b>5,808</b>	<b>5,808</b>	<b>5,808</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>17,424</b>
<b>135</b>	<b>Equipment, Vehicles and Furniture</b>						
4201	Office equipment, furniture, computers and licences	5,955	5,955	5,955			17,864
	<i>Sub-total</i>	<b>5,955</b>	<b>5,955</b>	<b>5,955</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>17,864</b>
<b>140</b>	<b>Transfers &amp; Grants to Implementing Partners</b>						
2210	Cambodia national activities	641,662	156,302	24,679			822,644
2211	China national activities	641,662	156,302	24,679			822,644
2212	Indonesia national activities	641,662	156,302	24,679			822,644
2213	Philippines national activities	641,662	156,302	24,679			822,644
2214	Thailand national activities	641,662	156,302	24,679			822,644
2215	Viet Nam national activities	641,662	156,302	24,679			822,644
2101	GEF Small Grants Project			520,000			520,000
2102	Contracts to support Component 1						0
2103	Contracts to support Component 2 (includes SEA LEARN)		150,000	150,000			300,000
2104	Contracts to support Component 3 (Seagrass Transboundary, Regional Green Fins and Cambodia Blue Carbon)			350,000			350,000
	<i>Sub-total</i>	<b>3,849,974</b>	<b>1,087,814</b>	<b>1,168,076</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6,105,864</b>
<b>160</b>	<b>Travels</b>						
1603	Travel UNOPS National Coordinators and PCU	55,432	55,432	55,432			166,295
3202	Travel of Consultants	8,920	8,920	8,920			26,760
3203	Travel of Mid-Term Evaluator	3,333	3,333	3,333			10,000
3204	Travel of Final Evaluator	3,333	3,333	3,333			10,000
3205	Study Tours						

UNEP Budget Line		I	II	III	PMC	M&E	TOTAL
3207	Group Training						
3301	Steering Committee and Regional Scientific Technical Committee meetings	134,436	134,436	134,436			403,308
3302	Regional Working Group Meetings	224,532	224,532	224,532			673,597
3303	Other Travel (TDA/SAP, Legislation, GIS and monitoring, economic valuation and ad-hoc meetings)	92,000	92,000	92,000			276,000
	<i>Sub-total</i>	<b>521,987</b>	<b>521,987</b>	<b>521,987</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,565,960</b>
	<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>6,585,752</b>	<b>3,345,011</b>	<b>3,328,477</b>	<b>667,194</b>	<b>273,111</b>	<b>14,199,545</b>

### SCSSAP Budget Revision: Breakdown by Year

UNEP Budget Line		Expenditure until 2024	2025	2026	TOTAL	Current Budget	Variance
<b>010</b>	<b>Staff &amp; Personnel (Including Consultants)</b>						
1101	Senior Project Manager	481,898	156,108	157,669	795,675	761,723	33,952
1102	Project Management Support Specialist (Country Coordinator)	409,499	107,400	109,548	626,447	610,866	15,581
1103	Scientific Coordinator	296,797	100,600	103,116	500,513	496,597	3,916
1104	Communications / Technical Support Officer		44,000	67,980	111,980	200,000	-88,020
1105	Project Support Officer	127,807	56,474	59,198	243,479	291,974	-48,495
1106	Technical Specialist	52,519	101,592	104,132	258,243	126,189	132,054
1107	Administrative Assistant	39,206	43,869	45,125	128,200	97,800	30,400
1108	Travel and Events Assistant		23,200	34,800	58,000		58,000
	<i>Sub-total</i>	<b>1,407,726</b>	<b>633,243</b>	<b>681,568</b>	<b>2,722,537</b>	<b>2,585,149</b>	<b>137,388</b>
1201	Inception Phase Consultants (R.Molina & V.Hart)	167,373			167,373	167,373	0

UNEP Budget Line		Expenditure until 2024	2025	2026	TOTAL	Current Budget	Variance
1202	NIR Consultants (Vietnam, Philippines and Regional)	99,174			99,174	99,174	0
1206	Thematic regional and national consultants	749,369	250,000	250,000	1,249,369	950,864	298,505
1207	Consultants others (Economic valuation, Financing, TDA/SAP, Governance)	27,300	95,000	70,000	192,300	350,000	-157,700
1220	Evaluator (Mid-term)		30,000		30,000	30,000	0
1221	Evaluator (Terminal)			40,000	40,000	40,000	0
	<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>1,043,216</b>	<b>375,000</b>	<b>360,000</b>	<b>1,778,216</b>	<b>1,637,411</b>	<b>140,805</b>
<b>120</b>	<b>Contract Services</b>				-		
2302	Meeting venues	23,967	55,000	26,924	105,891	105,891	0
2303	Translation services		5,000	5,000	10,000	40,000	-30,000
2304	Printing, design and communication product services	12,229	25,000	25,000	62,229	143,115	-80,886
2305	Audits		12,000		12,000	12,000	0
2306	Website, database, online reporting and GIS services	823		50,000	50,823	159,361	-108,538
	<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>37,019</b>	<b>97,000</b>	<b>106,924</b>	<b>240,943</b>	<b>460,367</b>	<b>-219,424</b>
<b>125</b>	<b>Operating and Other Costs</b>				-		
4301	Premise Rent	14,517	14,000	18,275	46,792	50,000	-3,208
5101	UNOPS Operating costs (ex 1204 & 2204 BL)	766,412	379,026	558,507	1,703,945	1,703,945	0
	<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>780,929</b>	<b>393,026</b>	<b>576,782</b>	<b>1,750,737</b>	<b>1,753,945</b>	<b>-3,208</b>
<b>130</b>	<b>Supplies, Commodities and Materials</b>				-		
4101	Office Supplies	424	8,000	9,000	17,424	28,841	-11,417
	<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>424</b>	<b>8,000</b>	<b>9,000</b>	<b>17,424</b>	<b>28,841</b>	<b>-11,417</b>
<b>135</b>	<b>Equipment, Vehicles and Furniture</b>				-		
4201	Office equipment, furniture, computers and licences	8,873	4,500	4,491	17,864	17,864	0
	<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>8,873</b>	<b>4,500</b>	<b>4,491</b>	<b>17,864</b>	<b>17,864</b>	<b>0</b>

UNEP Budget Line		Expenditure until 2024	2025	2026	TOTAL	Current Budget	Variance
<b>140</b>	<b>Transfers &amp; Grants to Implementing Partners</b>						
2210	Cambodia national activities	600,277	127,199	95,168	822,644	822,644	0
2211	China national activities	513,280	192,449	116,915	822,644	822,644	0
2212	Indonesia national activities	-	274,215	548,429	822,644	822,644	0
2213	Philippines national activities	205,661	342,768	274,215	822,644	822,644	0
2214	Thailand national activities	641,662	180,982		822,644	822,644	0
2215	Viet Nam national activities		274,215	548,429	822,644	822,644	0
2101	GEF Small Grants Project		150,000	370,000	520,000	520,000	0
2102	Contracts to support Component 1				0	80,000	-80,000
2103	Contracts to support Component 2 (includes SEA LEARN)		150,000	150,000	300,000	325,674	-25,674
2104	Contracts to support Component 3 (Seagrass Transboundary, Regional Green Fins and Cambodia Blue Carbon)		100,000	250,000	350,000	320,000	30,000
	<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>1,960,880</b>	<b>1,791,828</b>	<b>2,353,156</b>	<b>6,105,864</b>	<b>6,181,538</b>	<b>-75,674</b>
<b>160</b>	<b>Travels</b>				-		
1603	Travel UNOPS National Coordinators and PCU	126,295	20,000	20,000	166,295	300,000	-133,705
3202	Travel of Consultants	1,760	12,500	12,500	26,760	190,000	-163,240
3203	Travel of Mid-Term Evaluator		10,000		10,000	15,000	-5,000
3204	Travel of Final Evaluator			10,000	10,000	20,000	-10,000
3205	Study Tours				-	150,000	-150,000
3207	Group Training				-	160,000	-160,000
3301	Steering Committee and Regional Scientific Technical Committee meetings	93,308	130,000	180,000	403,308	255,697	147,611
3302	Regional Working Group Meetings	273,597	200,000	200,000	673,597	343,733	329,864

<b>UNEP Budget Line</b>		<b>Expenditure until 2024</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2026</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>Current Budget</b>	<b>Variance</b>
3303	Other Travel (TDA/SAP, Legislation, GIS and monitoring, economic valuation and ad-hoc meetings)		146,000	130,000	276,000	100,000	176,000
	<i>Sub-total</i>	<b>494,960</b>	<b>518,500</b>	<b>552,500</b>	<b>1,565,960</b>	<b>1,534,430</b>	<b>31,530</b>
	<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>5,734,027</b>	<b>3,821,097</b>	<b>4,644,421</b>	<b>14,199,545</b>	<b>14,199,545</b>	<b>0</b>