11th GEF INTERNATIONAL WATERS CONFERENCE
19-22 OCTOBER 2026 • BALI, INDONESIA

IWC11 SESSION DESCRIPTION

Session Title: How to Accelerate Blue Innovation and Partnerships in Transboundary Marine Systems (An Accelerator Lab)	
Session Type and Code: Clinic 16 (C16)	
Session lead(s) (name, affiliation and email)	• Alexandra REGNER-BURKE, Blueing the Caspian Sea alexandrarb@unops.org • Alexandru Cosmin Buteica, World Bank abuteica@worldbank.org • Khristine Gudczinski, SCS SAP Project khristinecg@unops.org
Proposed format:	Clinics – The IW Clinics offer an interactive way to discuss specific issues or challenges in a rotational set-up, allowing attendees to drive their own learning and share experiences.
Room setup:	flexible chair set up for three groupings roving mics (2) flipchart (3)
Expected attendance (number of participants)	20-30 participants
Rapporteur (name, affiliation, email)	Ob-Orm Utthasit, SCS SAP Project obormu@unops.org
Agenda (please include allocated time and speakers names and affiliation)	

Agenda for Day 3, Wednesday, 21 October 2026, 15:30-17:00
2 x 45-minute rotations

- **15:30 – 15:32 | Kickoff & framing**: Welcome, ground rules, and framing the "Co-Design Accelerator" concept
  Moderator: Khristine Gudczinski, SCS SAP Project
- **15:32 – 15:40 | Spark pitches** (2 mins each):
  - **Operationalizing Convention protocols, regional mechanisms and multilevel partnerships to drive effective transboundary implementation**
    Speaker: Alexandra Regner-Burke (UNOPS), Mateusz Benko (Tehran Convention Secretariat, UNEP) from Blueing the Caspian Sea
  - **Building community ownership and self-sustaining small grant pipelines** ($50K SEA Grants)
    Speakers: Ivan Pavletich Meza (UNOPS), Tri Edi Kuriandewa (SCS SAP - Indonesia) and Setra Kusumardana (Yayasan WeBe Konservasi Ketapang)
  - **Scaling market-based eco-innovation** ($300k grant/accelerator pipeline models)

        - *Speaker: Alexandru Cosmin Buteica (World Bank)*
- **15:40 – 16:05 | Co-design sprint** (25 mins across 3 Station Clusters)
    - ***Cluster 1:*** **Transboundary multi-agency & partnership action framework**
        - Mentors: Mateusz Benko (Tehran Convention Secretariat, UNEP), Alexandra Regner-Burke (UNOPS)
    - ***Cluster 2:*** **Community ownership & eco-restoration project concept** Mentors: Tri Edi Kuriandewa (SCS SAP), Setra Kusumardana (Yayasan WeBe Konservasi Ketapang) and Ivan Pavletich Meza (UNOPS)
    - ***Cluster 3:*** **Blue innovation challenge & small grant pipeline scheme**
        - Mentors: Alexandru Cosmin Buteica (World Bank), Glenne Pearce-Oroz, Blueing the Black Sea Project (UNOPS), Jimin Hong (SCS SAP)
- **16:05 – 16:13 | Accelerator showcase & peer review** (8 mins): 3-minute participant pitches of 1-page Blueprint Canvases followed by Mentor feasibility feedback.
- **16:13 – 16:15 | Wrap-up and transition**

- Second run (45 mins):

    - Minutes 00:45 – 01:30: Repeat of Phases 1–4 with a new group of participants at chosen Cluster Stations.

Session Description:

Moving beyond traditional presentations, Clinic 16 functions as an interactive ***Innovation and Partnership Accelerator Lab*** designed to address critical hurdles in transboundary marine systems.

Drawing on real-world experiences from the Seas of East Asia (SCS SAP Project), the Black Sea (BBSEA), and the Caspian Sea (Blueing the Caspian Sea), co-organizers from the World Bank, UNEP, and UNOPS step in not as lecturers, but as expert mentors working directly alongside participants.

Participants select from three hands-on co-design clusters: (1) navigating complex multi-agency governance and geopolitical friction such as by anchoring actions into existing legal frameworks (e.g., Tehran and Bucharest Conventions) and actively engaging local decisionmakers and communities at project inception; (2) sustaining grassroots marine conservation and bridging low-cost community science with technology (Seagrass Watch, LILA monitoring, GoGo Mangrove) with local eco-tourism revenue; and (3) structuring blue innovation challenges ($300k accelerator pipelines and $50k SEA Grants) to mobilize private capital and sustain and scale solutions.

Working around 1-page Blueprint Canvases, ‘mentors’ and participants jointly diagnose project challenges, adapt proven regional tools, and pitch concrete, co-created solutions.

Session Objectives:

The objectives of this clinic are to:

- help GEF IW project managers and technical staff transition from discussing implementation bottlenecks to co-developing concrete, adaptable 1-Page Blueprints grounded in proven regional tools.
- support project leads, policy officers, and regional coordinators in streamlining complex multi-agency dynamics and geopolitical hurdles by anchoring TDA/SAP implementation directly into binding legal architectures.
- share with national project coordinators and community facilitators applied practical tools (*Seagrass Watch*, *LILA monitoring*, local eco-tourism frameworks) to embed long-term community ownership and self-sustaining revenue mechanisms into small grant schemes.
- broaden technical leads' and investment specialists' capacity to design $300k eco-innovation pipelines and leverage baseline pollution diagnostics to mobilize private capital.

Expected outcomes:

1. Replicable blueprint canvases. Tailored 1-Page Blueprints generated by participants for transboundary partnerships, community-led monitoring, and small grant pipelines where new ideas and solutions might emerge.
2. Enhanced operational knowledge and participant capacity to navigate multi-agency dynamics, geopolitical challenges, and post-project financing mechanisms.
3. Deeper understanding of the complexities and how to traverse cross-regional partnerships effectively.
4. Established peer-to-peer technical networks connecting project and technical leads across the GEF IW portfolio.
5. Scalable innovation pipelines and adaptable frameworks for launching market-based innovation challenges and small grant schemes in other IW water bodies.

Specific inputs to GEF-9

Recommendations on utilizing existing regional legal conventions and multi-level partnership architectures as permanent, self-sustaining anchors for GEF-9 SAP implementation which can be fed into modernizing TDA/SAP approach.

Evidence-based guidance on structuring GEF-9 private sector engagement, blending micro-grants ($50k) with market-based acceleration pipelines ($300k) to turn pollution diagnostics and entrepreneurial coastal community projects into bankable blue economy investments.