MID-TERM REVIEW

Project ID:	10873
Project Name:	Effectively Managing Networks of Marine Protected Areas in Large Marine Ecosystems in the ASEAN Region (ASEAN ENMAPS)
Countr(ies):	Regional, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand
Implementing Agency:	UNDP

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I. Overview

A. Description

Project name Effectively Managing Networks of Marine Protected Areas in Large Marine Ecosystems in the ASEAN Region (ASEAN ENMAPS)	
Country Regional, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand	
GEF ID 10873	Implementing Agency UNDP
Executing Entity ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity	
Trust Fund GET	Project Type FSP
Objective To develop and improve the management of networks of marine protected areas and marine corridors within selected Large Marine Ecosystems (LMEs) in the ASEAN region for the conservation of globally significant biodiversity and support for sustainable fisheries and other ecosystem goods and services.	

B. Key Dates

CEO Endorsement/Approval 12/12/2023	Agency Approval 3/1/2024
Implementation Start 3/1/2024	First Disbursement 3/1/2024
Expected MTR 9/1/2026	MTR Submission 10/20/2026
Actual MTR 8/6/2026	Expected Completion 3/1/2029

II. PROGRESS STATUS AND ISSUES

A. Main MTR Findings

The ASEAN ENMAPS remains a highly relevant and strategically important regional initiative addressing critical barriers to marine biodiversity conservation, ecological connectivity, and sustainable management of Large Marine Ecosystems (LMEs) across Southeast Asia. The project's design remains strong, innovative, and

aligned with regional and global biodiversity priorities, particularly through its focus on MPA networks, marine corridors, ecosystem-based management, and regional cooperation under the ASEAN framework. The ACB provides an important regional platform that enhances access to government institutions, facilitates policy dialogue, and strengthens opportunities for cross-country collaboration.

Overall project progress towards its objective is assessed as Moderate Unsatisfactory. While substantial progress has been achieved in generating scientific knowledge, conducting assessments, and establishing implementation foundations, many activities remain in planning and preparatory phases and have not yet translated into significant outcome-level results. Consequently, several indicators under Outcomes 2.1 and 2.2 are currently off-track, and considerable acceleration of implementation will be required during the remainder of the project.

Under Outcome 1.1, the project has successfully generated a robust scientific evidence base through ecological connectivity analyses, biodiversity assessments, fisheries resilience studies, governance assessments, and geospatial datasets. These efforts have culminated in the development of conceptual designs for eight MPA networks covering approximately 13.3 million hectares across Indonesia, Thailand, and the Philippines. Although these designs remain under review and validation, they represent a significant achievement and provide the ecological foundation for future governance, management, and financing interventions.

Under Outcome 2.1, the project has completed important preparatory activities, including baseline assessments, stakeholder consultations, perception mapping, fisheries monitoring systems, and introductory Integrated Coastal Management (ICM) training. However, no MPA management plans have been revised, no measurable improvements in management effectiveness have been demonstrated, and no sustainable financing mechanisms, blue economy investments, or livelihood interventions have yet been implemented. Similarly, integrated management approaches such as ICM, MSP, and EAFM have not yet been operationalized at site level.

Under Outcome 2.2, the project has strengthened regional visibility and initiated important discussions on governance arrangements for MPA networks and marine corridors through participation in regional and global forums and dedicated technical workshops. However, governance development remains largely conceptual. Formal governance frameworks, institutional arrangements, coordination mechanisms, and collaborative management systems required to operationalize MPA networks and marine corridors have not yet been established.

Under Outcome 3.1, the project has established important foundations for regional knowledge management and capacity development through Training Needs Assessments, development of training modules, delivery of introductory training programmes, establishment of a Knowledge Management Plan, and creation of the ASEAN ENMAPS knowledge platform. However, capacity-building investments remain at an early stage and have not yet translated into measurable improvements in institutional performance, management practices, or stakeholder behaviour.

Summary of Conclusions

The MTR finds that the barriers identified during project design remain highly relevant. While the project has successfully addressed some knowledge gaps through scientific studies and capacity development, the governance, institutional, and financing constraints that underpin marine conservation challenges in the region remain largely unresolved. Fragmented mandates, weak coordination mechanisms, limited institutional capacities, and the absence of sustainable financing arrangements continue to constrain progress toward integrated management of ecologically connected marine ecosystems.

Implementation has been affected by several operational challenges, including lengthy administrative and procurement procedures, centralized financial management arrangements, limited availability of government counterparts, staff turnover, logistical difficulties associated with remote project sites, and seasonal constraints affecting fieldwork. The most significant challenge has been the prolonged delay in obtaining the Special Presidential Authority (SPA) in the Philippines, which was only secured in March 2026 and significantly delayed implementation in one of the three participating countries.

The project has made positive progress in mainstreaming gender equality and social inclusion. Women account for approximately 40% of direct project beneficiaries, and gender considerations have been integrated into training programmes, stakeholder engagement processes, safeguards assessments, and monitoring systems. Data collection is systematically disaggregated by gender, youth, Indigenous Peoples, ethnic groups, and persons with disabilities. However, most achievements remain focused on participation rather than demonstrable gender outcomes, and it remains too early to assess impacts on leadership, decision-making, or access to benefits.

Financial performance is a significant concern. By the end of the first quarter of 2026, cumulative expenditure amounted to only USD 1.36 million, representing approximately 11% of the total GEF grant. This reflects broader implementation delays and the predominance of planning and assessment activities rather than field implementation and investments. Co-financing realization is similarly low, reaching only 13% of planned commitments, with weaknesses identified in co-financing tracking and reporting systems.

The MTR identifies sustainability as a challenge. The project currently lacks a comprehensive sustainability or exit strategy, and progress in developing governance frameworks, sustainable financing mechanisms, and long-term monitoring systems has been limited. Stakeholders generally support the concept of MPA networks but have limited understanding of how these networks will function in practice, including governance responsibilities, financing arrangements, and institutional roles. Financial sustainability remains a particularly significant risk, as no sustainable financing strategies, business plans, or conservation financing mechanisms have yet been developed.

Overall, the MTR concludes that ASEAN ENMAPS remains highly relevant and possesses strong potential to achieve transformative conservation outcomes. The project has successfully established many of the scientific and institutional foundations required for success. However, the next phase of implementation will be critical. Accelerated delivery, stronger governance development, enhanced country-level implementation capacity, increased stakeholder ownership, and rapid advancement of sustainable financing and community-based interventions will be essential if the project is to translate its strong foundations into lasting conservation, governance, and socio-economic outcomes across the region.

B. Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder consultations during the project preparation phase initiated in May 2022 when the regional PPG inception workshop was convened, involving multiple stakeholders from the three participating countries and across the region, including representatives of government ministries and institutions, civil society organizations, private sector, UNDP country offices, and donors. National level inception workshops were then held in July and August 2022 to enable more detailed discussion on the project strategy, proposed activities, complementary initiatives, etc. The national inception workshops set the stage for site level stakeholder consultations that were conducted between August and November 2022. The PPG teams consulted with the MPA management entities, arranged focus group discussions to prepare the METT baseline assessments, met with local government units to present the project and discuss synergies, arranged consultations with women's groups and Indigenous Peoples groups and associations, met with local fishers

and tourism operators, and visited the field sites. The information gathered during these stakeholder consultations formed the basis for the formulation of project activities under each of the project outputs. The draft project strategy, i.e., outcomes, outputs and activities were presented and discussed in national validation workshops held between December 2022 and February 2023, and a regional validation workshop was convened in February 2023 in Manila.

During the Project Preparation Grant (PPG) stage, a stakeholder analysis was conducted and identified the key stakeholders for the project based on their respective interests, production capacities, governance structure, academic focus, public mandates, or national policy directives. As a result, a stakeholder engagement plan was developed to ensure meaningful, effective, informed participation of stakeholders in the formulation and implementation of UNDP programmes and projects, providing stakeholders opportunities to express their views at all points in the project decision-making process on matters that affect them.

During implementation, engagement between ACB's PMU and national counterparts has primarily been facilitated through the project's national coordination mechanisms, particularly NSC in Thailand and NTWG in Indonesia. These platforms have provided important channels for consultation, coordination, information sharing, and government engagement, helping to maintain country ownership and alignment with national priorities. In Indonesia, stakeholder engagement has been particularly strong at both the national and local levels. The local PMU has played an active role in maintaining regular communication with government counterparts and supporting day-to-day coordination of project activities. Being hosted within the Ministry of Forestry has facilitated close engagement with the agencies responsible for managing the target MPAs under the project, particularly Wakatobi National Park and Togean Islands National Park. However, the MTR identified an opportunity to strengthen engagement with the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries (MMAF), which manages a substantially larger portfolio of marine protected areas and marine conservation initiatives across Indonesia. Given MMAF's central role in marine conservation policy, fisheries management, and MPA governance, stronger engagement could help enhance synergies, avoid duplication of efforts, and create opportunities for scaling up successful approaches developed under ASEAN ENMAPS. Improved collaboration with MMAF would also increase the potential for project lessons, methodologies, and scientific outputs to influence broader national marine conservation policies and programmes beyond the immediate project sites.

In Thailand, engagement with government counterparts has generally been positive, particularly through the National Steering Committee. However, the resignation of the Project Manager created a temporary communication and coordination gap with some government agencies. During consultations, the Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning (ONEP) emphasized the importance of maintaining regular communication and coordination with them as a principal national counterpart. It was noted that even when activities are primarily focused on local-level implementation, such as those involving individual MPAs, national agencies should remain fully informed and engaged.

The Philippines presents a different situation. The prolonged delay in obtaining SPA, which was only secured in March 2026, significantly constrained stakeholder engagement and project coordination. As a consequence, no dedicated local PMU had been established during much of the implementation period, and engagement with national and local stakeholders remained limited.

At the community level, stakeholder engagement remains at a relatively early stage of development. This is largely a reflection of the project's implementation trajectory to date, which has focused predominantly on scientific research, baseline assessments, ecological studies, governance analyses, safeguards processes, and institutional capacity development. As a result, much of the interaction with local communities has been linked to consultations, data collection, perception mapping exercises, safeguards assessments, and awareness-raising activities rather than direct implementation of community-focused interventions.

While communities have been engaged through various assessment and consultation processes, the more substantive activities envisaged under Component 2 — including sustainable livelihood development, entrepreneurial support, and marine corridor management activities — have not yet matured sufficiently to generate sustained engagement with community members. Consequently, opportunities for communities to participate actively in project implementation, decision-making, capacity development, and benefit-sharing remain limited at this stage. This situation is particularly evident in relation to Outputs 2.1.3 and 2.1.4, where activities related to sustainable financing, blue economy initiatives, livelihood diversification, and entrepreneurial development have yet to commence in a substantive manner.

The MTR recognizes that the current level of community engagement is consistent with the project's implementation stage and the sequencing of activities envisaged under the project design. Nevertheless, as the project transitions from research and planning towards implementation, significantly greater emphasis will need to be placed on community engagement, participation, and ownership. This will be particularly important given that many of the project's intended outcomes — including improved MPA management, sustainable fisheries practices, marine conservation, and livelihood enhancement — depend on the active involvement and support of local communities.

A similar situation is evident with respect to private sector engagement. Given the current stage of project implementation and the limited progress in advancing investment-related and field-based interventions, engagement with the private sector remains relatively limited and has not yet matured into the type of strategic partnerships envisaged at project design. To date, private sector involvement has largely been indirect or exploratory in nature, with limited evidence of private sector actors playing a substantive role in project implementation, investment planning, or long-term sustainability strategies. The project design recognized that achieving sustainable management of MPA networks and associated marine corridors would require engagement with private sector actors not merely as service providers, but as strategic partners capable of contributing expertise, innovation, investment, market access, and long-term financial sustainability. This is particularly important in the context of addressing the financing gap associated with marine conservation and supporting the transition towards more sustainable and resilient coastal and marine economies.

However, given that activities related to sustainable financing, blue economy investments, livelihood development, and marine corridor management remain largely at the planning and conceptual stages, opportunities for meaningful private sector engagement have not yet fully materialized. As a result, no significant private sector partnerships have yet been established that could contribute to strengthening the financial sustainability, scalability, or long-term viability of MPA networks and marine corridors. In particular, the project has not yet developed or tested innovative financing mechanisms involving private sector participation. Activities envisaged under the project design, such as the development and piloting of sustainable financing models, blended finance approaches, conservation investments, payment for ecosystem services schemes, blue economy partnerships, biodiversity financing mechanisms, or private sector-supported conservation initiatives, have not yet progressed to implementation.

The MTR considers that strengthening private sector engagement should become a higher priority during the next phase of implementation. As the project moves towards the development of investment projects, sustainable financing strategies, and livelihood interventions, there will be opportunities to identify and cultivate partnerships with private sector actors that can support both conservation objectives and economic sustainability. Such partnerships will be critical if the project is to move beyond grant-funded interventions and establish mechanisms capable of sustaining conservation outcomes beyond the lifetime of the project.

C. Gender Equality

The project design recognizes key gender equality and women empowerment issues including that women's contributions in the coastal and marine resources management and fisheries have often been overlooked. Oftentimes their activities are not given equal attention as that of their men counterparts, such as gleaning, aquaculture, and other onshore fishing are not counted as 'fishing', or their efforts in conservation, i.e., taking on the tasks of taking care of mangrove nurseries, MPA management related activities, etc. Therefore, when it comes to organizing fishers' groups and conservation groups to address issues on the coastal and marine resources, often less women in the membership, or none. Although women belong to more vulnerable sector, it has also been recognized that men and women have unique roles and different capacities in terms of protecting and harnessing the coastal and marine resources.

The project design demonstrated a strong commitment to gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment, with gender considerations integrated throughout the project cycle. The project goes beyond ensuring women's participation by seeking to address structural barriers that limit women's access to marine and coastal resources, decision-making processes, economic opportunities, and capacity development. The strategy is aligned with UNDP, GEF, and CBD gender policies and includes practical measures such as gender-sensitive indicators, sex-disaggregated monitoring data, inclusive stakeholder consultations, and targeted engagement of women, Indigenous Peoples, and other marginalized groups. The emphasis on equal representation in governance structures, policy processes, and community planning reflects a comprehensive approach to promoting gender-responsive marine conservation and fisheries management.

During the PPG stage, the project undertook a detailed gender analysis and developed a Gender Action Plan (GAP) to guide the project implementation team in mainstreaming gender, addressing gender concerns, and promoting gender equality and women's empowerment throughout the project to better achieve and sustain project results. The GAP recognizes the opportunity for the ASEAN ENMAPS project to address strategic gender needs by increasing women's access and control over coastal and marine resources, improving the participation of women in decision-making; and generating socioeconomic benefits for women and men by creating equal opportunities for enterprise and employment (equal pay for equal work) and improving social systems. The GAP defines specific gender actions supported with measurable targets.

A notable strength of the gender strategy is its focus on economic empowerment and leadership development, recognizing women not only as beneficiaries but also as agents of change in coastal and marine resource management. Planned interventions include support for women's entrepreneurship, sustainable livelihood development, access to finance, participation in producer organizations and fisheries cooperatives, and capacity building at individual, community, and institutional levels. The project also seeks to strengthen the enabling environment for gender mainstreaming through training, policy support, and knowledge sharing. However, while the strategy is ambitious and well-articulated, its effectiveness will depend on the extent to which these commitments are translated into concrete actions, measurable targets, adequate resourcing, and sustained engagement of women in decision-making and benefit-sharing throughout implementation.

In terms of implementation, the project took deliberate measures to promote the participation of women, particularly women from local communities, in consultations, stakeholder engagement processes, baseline assessments, perception mapping exercises, and other project activities. These efforts have helped ensure that women's perspectives, experiences, and priorities are considered in project planning and implementation processes. To date, women account for approximately 40% of all beneficiaries directly engaged through project-supported capacity-building activities, consultations, workshops, and stakeholder meetings, representing 249 women out of a total of 620 participants. This demonstrates that the project has been reasonably successful in ensuring that women are represented and included in project activities across the participating countries. While the current participation rate remains slightly below the 50% target established in the Gender Action Plan, the achievement should be viewed in the context of the project's implementation stage. Much of the project's work to date has focused on assessments, technical studies, institutional engagement, and preparatory activities, while direct implementation and community-level interventions have

only recently commenced. As a result, opportunities for broader engagement with local communities — including women beneficiaries at the household and community levels — have been relatively limited so far. The participation achieved to date nevertheless indicates that the project has been actively considering gender balance in the design and implementation of its activities.

Given that field-level implementation and community engagement activities are only beginning to scale up, there is a reasonable expectation that women's participation rates can increase during the remaining implementation period. As more livelihood activities, capacity-building programmes, community consultations, and site-level interventions are rolled out, the project will have additional opportunities to engage women directly and work towards achieving or exceeding the targets established in the Gender Action Plan.

In addition, gender equality and social inclusion considerations have been integrated into training and capacity-building activities. GEDSI principles were incorporated into training outlines and curricula to support the delivery of gender-responsive capacity development programmes. This is intended to strengthen awareness among participants of gender and social inclusion issues within marine and coastal resource management and to promote more inclusive approaches to governance, stakeholder engagement, and conservation planning.

Challenges remain in achieving meaningful representation of women and gender-focused institutions within project governance structures. In particular, efforts to engage ministries and agencies responsible for women's affairs in the National Steering Committees have achieved limited success. While invitations were extended to the relevant ministries, participation has generally not materialized. Consultations with these institutions indicated that many did not perceive themselves as having a direct mandate or technical expertise related to marine conservation and marine protected area management. In addition, some agencies cited limited staffing resources and competing priorities as reasons for their inability to participate in project governance mechanisms. This situation highlights a broader challenge often encountered in environmental projects, where gender equality institutions may not traditionally be involved in natural resource management and conservation initiatives, despite the significant gender dimensions associated with these sectors.

Another gender-related challenge identified during implementation is that some sectors and functions associated with marine protected area management and marine conservation remain traditionally male-dominated. This is particularly evident in operational areas such as marine patrols, law enforcement, fisheries compliance monitoring, vessel operations, and certain field-based conservation activities. These roles have historically been occupied primarily by men and continue to exhibit relatively low participation by women in many of the participating countries. As a result, opportunities for women to participate directly in some of the project's marine management and enforcement-related activities may be more limited than in other areas such as community engagement, research, education, communication, post-harvest fisheries, or conservation planning. This presents a challenge in achieving balanced gender representation across all aspects of project implementation.

A positive achievement under the project's gender mainstreaming efforts has been the integration of gender considerations into the Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA) processes undertaken at the project sites. The inclusion of gender dimensions within the SESA framework has helped ensure that environmental and social risks, impacts, opportunities, and stakeholder perspectives are assessed through a gender-responsive lens rather than being treated as gender-neutral issues. The SESA studies explicitly considered gender-differentiated roles, vulnerabilities, priorities, and access to resources among coastal and marine resource users. This included examining how women and men interact differently with marine and coastal ecosystems, their respective roles in fisheries and related livelihoods, their participation in natural resource management, and their access to decision-making processes.

The project has demonstrated good practice in its monitoring and stakeholder engagement processes by systematically collecting and reporting participation data in a disaggregated manner. Beyond gender, the project has sought to capture information on a range of social inclusion dimensions, including persons with disabilities (PwDs), youth, ethnic groups, and Indigenous Peoples and local communities. The collection of disaggregated data enables the project to monitor the inclusiveness of its activities and assess whether different stakeholder groups are being adequately represented in consultations, capacity-building programmes, stakeholder engagement processes, and other project-supported activities. Importantly, the systematic collection of data on Indigenous Peoples, ethnic communities, youth, and persons with disabilities supports the project's broader objective of ensuring that marine conservation and governance interventions are inclusive and responsive to the diverse needs and circumstances of coastal communities embracing the LNOB principles. Such information can help inform the design of targeted engagement strategies, capacity-building initiatives, and safeguards measures that better reflect the realities of different stakeholder groups.

While the collection of disaggregated data is an important achievement in itself, the project should continue to strengthen the analysis and utilization of this information. Moving forward, there is an opportunity to use the data not only for reporting participation rates but also to assess the quality of participation, representation in decision-making processes, access to project benefits, and whether project interventions are contributing to more equitable outcomes across different social groups. This will help ensure that the project's commitment to gender equality and social inclusion is translated into tangible and measurable results throughout implementation.

While these achievements represent positive progress, it is still too early to assess whether these efforts have resulted in substantive changes in women's participation in decision-making, access to benefits, leadership roles, or influence over marine resource management. Most activities to date have focused on establishing enabling conditions for gender-responsive implementation rather than generating measurable gender outcomes. Continued attention will therefore be needed to ensure that gender considerations move beyond participation and are translated into tangible benefits, enhanced leadership opportunities, and more equitable outcomes for women and other underrepresented groups throughout the remainder of the project.

D. Knowledge Management

External project communication with communities and the public: The project has established several foundational tools, including a Knowledge Management Plan, the ASEAN ENMAPS website, communication research, and the Fun Fact Friday CEPA initiative. However, several activities envisaged have not yet been implemented. These include the development and implementation of a full communications strategy, systematic dissemination of technical knowledge products, structured cross-country learning activities, regular analysis of website and communication analytics, and mechanisms to assess whether knowledge products are being used by stakeholders. Further work is therefore required to move from communication product development towards a more strategic and results-oriented knowledge management and communications system (also see Outcome 3.1 reporting for more details).

The project has made positive progress in establishing knowledge management systems and promoting knowledge sharing among stakeholders in the three participating countries. Given the project's mandate and available resources, the current focus on Indonesia, Thailand, and the Philippines is both logical and appropriate. However, given the regional nature of the LMEs targeted by the project, the MTR identifies an opportunity to broaden the scope of selected knowledge-sharing activities beyond the three participating countries. In particular, consideration should be given to engaging relevant institutions from Viet Nam and Malaysia in knowledge exchange and learning opportunities generated through the project. Although these countries are not direct project beneficiaries, they share ecological, fisheries, and governance interests within

the same marine ecosystems targeted by ASEAN ENMAPS and are therefore important stakeholders in the broader regional conservation agenda. Engaging institutions from Viet Nam and Malaysia would therefore enhance the regional value of the knowledge generated by the project and contribute to broader awareness and uptake of emerging good practices.

Furthermore, involving these countries in selected regional workshops, technical exchanges, knowledge-sharing events, and dissemination activities could help lay the groundwork for future regional cooperation and potential scaling-up of MPA network approaches beyond the immediate project sites. Such engagement would also align with the project's long-term vision of promoting collaborative governance and conservation across interconnected marine ecosystems.

Internal project communication with stakeholders: As established earlier, communication and engagement with stakeholders have primarily been facilitated through the project's governance and coordination mechanisms, particularly the regional Project Steering Committee, National Steering Committees, National Technical Working Groups, and various technical consultations and workshops. These platforms have provided important opportunities to share progress updates, discuss implementation challenges, and engage government counterparts and technical stakeholders in project implementation.

However, consultations undertaken during the MTR suggest that there are inconsistencies in stakeholders' understanding of the project's long-term vision, intended outcomes, and strategic approach. In particular, some stakeholders, especially local authorities, MPA teams, and community representatives, appear to have developed expectations that are not fully aligned with the project's intended scope and objectives. This is perhaps understandable given that much of the implementation to date has focused on scientific studies, assessments, planning processes, and capacity development activities, while many of the tangible interventions and long-term outcomes envisaged by the project have yet to materialize.

The MTR found that several stakeholders did not have a clear understanding of some of the project's central concepts, particularly the notions of LMEs, MPA networks, marine corridors, and integrated marine area management. While stakeholders generally understand the importance of marine conservation and protected areas, there appears to be less clarity regarding how the project intends to operationalize ecological connectivity across multiple protected areas and multiple countries, what the practical implications of MPA networks and marine corridors will be, and what roles and responsibilities different institutions and stakeholders are expected to play in achieving these outcomes.

This challenge is particularly important because the project's Theory of Change is based on a relatively complex and innovative approach that seeks to move beyond individual site-based conservation towards the management of interconnected marine ecosystems across larger seascapes. Achieving this vision requires a shared understanding among project teams, government counterparts, local authorities, communities, and other stakeholders regarding both the ultimate conservation objectives and the pathways through which project activities are expected to contribute to those objectives.

Another area where the project could strengthen implementation relates to internal coordination and knowledge exchange among the country PMUs. While communication channels exist through informal platforms such as WhatsApp and Viber chat groups, there is currently limited evidence of regular and structured interaction among PMU teams across the participating countries. Given the regional nature of ASEAN ENMAPS and the common implementation challenges being faced across countries, more systematic engagement among project teams could provide significant benefits in terms of peer learning, problem-solving, coordination, and the sharing of good practices. The need for enhanced PMU coordination is further reinforced by the uneven level of institutional capacity and staffing across the three participating countries. At present, Indonesia is the only country with a fully established and operational PMU structure. Thailand has experienced staffing constraints, including turnover in the Project Manager position, and continues to operate with a more limited implementation team. In the Philippines, the prolonged delay in obtaining SPA has meant

that a fully functional PMU has not yet been established. As a result, there are significant differences in implementation experience, institutional memory, and operational capacity among the three countries.

III. Core Indicators

Indicator 2 Marine protected areas created or under improved management

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
4873572	2659459	2090339.11	

Indicator 2.1 Marine Protected Areas Newly created

Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
60000			

Name of the Protected Area	WDPA ID	IUCN Category	Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
MPA 1 (New) - Indonesia			20,000.00			
MPA 2 (New) - Philippines			20,000.00			
MPA 3 (New) - Thailand			20,000.00			

Indicator 2.2 Marine Protected Areas Under improved management effectiveness

Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
4813572	2659459	2090339.11	

Name of the Protected Area	WDPA ID	IUCN Category	Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)	METT score (Baseline at CEO Endorsement)	METT score (Achieved at MTR)	METT score (Achieved at TE)

Agoo - Damortis Protected Landscape and Seascape	5208	Protected Landscape/Seascape	10,775.00	10,775.00	0.00			0.00	
BBBIDA Marine Protected Area Network: Bani-Bolinao-Burgos-Infanta-Dasol-Agno			254,920.00	572.00	0.00			0.00	
Biosphere Reserves Ranong Thailand	145594		11,707.00	31,007.00	0.00			0.00	
Con Dao National Park	10111		5,830.00		0.00			0.00	
Kepulauan Togean National Park	20429	National Park	362,605.00	365,241.00	363,376.11			79.80	
Kepulauan Wakatobi National Park (ASEAN Heritage Park)	198427	National Park	1,390,000.00	1,320,987.00	1,320,987.00			78.80	
Masinloc-Oyon Bay Protected Landscape and Seascape	101392	Protected Landscape/Seascape	7,558.00		0.00			0.00	
Mu Ko Similan National Park	555705578	National Park	13,836.00	14,000.00	0.00			0.00	
Mu Ko Surin	4673	National Park	11,688.00	14,125.00	0.00			0.00	

National Park									
Muko Similan National Park (TH)	555705578	National Park			14,000.00			87.00	
Nha Trang Bay Protected Area	303035		10,500.00		0.00			0.00	
Tarutao National Park (ASEAN Heritage Park)	928	National Park	171,850.00	149,000.00	149,000.00			70.00	
Teluk Cenderawasih National Park	8102	National Park	1,453,500.00						
Ticao-Burias Pass Protected Seascape	555715057	Protected Landscape/Seascape	414,244.00	413,746.00	0.00			0.00	
Tubbataha Reef Natural Park (PH)	555715065	National Park	451,601.00	97,030.00	0.00			0.00	
Turtle Islands Wildlife Sanctuary	198475	Habitat/Species Management Area	242,958.00	242,976.00	242,976.00			57.00	

Indicator 4 Area of landscapes under improved practices (hectares; excluding protected areas)

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 4.1 Area of landscapes under improved management to benefit biodiversity (hectares, qualitative assessment, non-certified)

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 4.2 Area of landscapes under third-party certification incorporating biodiversity considerations

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Type/Name of Third Party Certification

Indicator 4.3 Area of landscapes under sustainable land management in production systems

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 4.4 Area of High Conservation Value or other forest loss avoided

Disaggregation Type	Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 4.5 Terrestrial OECMs supported

Name of the OECMs	WDPA-ID	Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)

Documents (Document(s) that justifies the HCVF)

Title

Indicator 5 Area of marine habitat under improved practices to benefit biodiversity (excluding protected areas)

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
	13,313,181.00	13,313,181.00	

Indicator 5.1 Fisheries under third-party certification incorporating biodiversity considerations

Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)

Type/name of the third-party certification

Indicator 5.2 Large Marine Ecosystems with reduced pollution and hypoxia

Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)
4	0	0	0

LME at PIF	LME at CEO Endorsement	LME at MTR	LME at TE
Bay of Bengual Indonesian Sea South China Sea Sulu-Celebes Sea			

Indicator 5.3 Marine OECMs supported

Name of the OECMs	WDPA-ID	Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 7 Shared water ecosystems under new or improved cooperative management

	Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)
Shared water Ecosystem		Bay of Bengual,Indonesian Sea,South China Sea,Sulu-Celebes Sea	Bay of Bengual,Indonesian Sea,South China Sea,Sulu-Celebes Sea	
Count	0	4	4	0

Indicator 7.1 Level of Transboundary Diagonostic Analysis and Strategic Action Program (TDA/SAP) formulation and implementation (scale of 1 to 4; see Guidance)

Shared Water Ecosystem	Rating (Expected at PIF)	Rating (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Rating (Achieved at MTR)	Rating (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 7.2 Level of Regional Legal Agreements and Regional management institution(s) (RMI) to support its implementation (scale of 1 to 4; see Guidance)

Shared Water Ecosystem	Rating (Expected at PIF)	Rating (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Rating (Achieved at MTR)	Rating (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 7.3 Level of National/Local reforms and active participation of Inter-Ministeral Committees (IMC; scale 1 to 4; See Guidance)

Shared Water Ecosystem	Rating (Expected at PIF)	Rating (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Rating (Achieved at MTR)	Rating (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 7.4 Level of engagement in IWLEARN throgh participation and delivery of key products(scale 1 to 4; see Guidance)

Shared Water Ecosystem	Rating (Expected at PIF)	Rating (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Rating (Achieved at MTR)	Rating (Achieved at TE)
Bay of Bengual		4	3	
Indonesian Sea		4	3	
South China Sea		4	3	
Sulu-Celebes Sea		4	3	

Indicator 8 Globally over-exploited fisheries moved to more sustainable levels

Metric Tons (Expected at PIF)	Metric Tons (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Metric Tons (Achieved at MTR)	Metric Tons (Achieved at TE)
	227,662.00	0.00	

Fishery Details

Updates on Fishery Details:

The Project reports 0 metric tons of globally over-exploited marine fisheries moved to more sustainable levels at this stage. Baseline fisheries assessments are being undertaken in 2026 and will provide the foundation for measuring progress under Core Indicator 8.

In Indonesia, the Project conducted fish catch monitoring from December 2025 to June 2026 in Kepulauan Togean National Park (KTNP) and Wakatobi National Park (WNP). The monitoring covers key fisheries and collects information on catch per unit effort (CPUE), catch size and size structure, catch composition, fishing effort, and fisher-gear inventory. Once the data is analyzed, fisheries baseline reference values will be established to help assess status of fisheries and identify fisheries requiring management interventions. CPUE, particularly when interpreted together with changes in catch composition and size structure, provides a practical indicator for tracking changes in fisheries within the project period.

While Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) remains an important theoretical fisheries management reference point, its practical application can be constrained by data scarcity, ecosystem complexity and environmental variability. Robust MSY estimation generally requires longer-term information on catch and effort and, depending on the method, stock

abundance, recruitment, mortality and population structure. The Project will therefore work with relevant Indonesian authorities to determine what additional information is available and whether MSY or other appropriate fisheries reference points can be used as complementary information.

Following completion and analysis of the baseline assessments, the Project will recommend and support appropriate fisheries management interventions to reduce fishing pressure on over-exploited fisheries and facilitate level of exploitation to move toward more sustainable levels. Subsequent monitoring of CPUE, catch composition, size structure and other fisheries indicators will be used to assess the direction of change. Where feasible, these will be complemented by direct estimates of stock condition, including fish visual census.

For project sites in Thailand and the Philippines, available secondary fisheries data from the respective national fisheries authorities will be used to characterize fisheries, establish available reference information, and identify and address priority threats to sustainable fisheries.

Indicator 11 People benefiting from GEF-financed investments

	Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)
Female	600,000	3,120	1,111	
Male	400,000	3,120	987	
Total	**1,000,000**	**6,240**	2,098	**0**

IV: Co Financing

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Anticipated at CEO($)	Materialized at MTR($)
Recipient Country Government	Indonesia, Ministry of Environment and Forestry	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	16,315,800.00	
Recipient Country Government	The Philippines, Department of Environment and Natural	Grant	Investment mobilized	7,501,721.00	

	Resources Bureau - Biodiversity Management Bureau				
Recipient Country Government	The Philippines, Department of Environment and Natural Resources Bureau - Biodiversity Management Bureau	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	3,225,187.00	
Recipient Country Government	Local Government Unit of Ligao, Albay, Region 5	Grant	Investment mobilized	121,148.00	
Recipient Country Government	Local Government Unit of Bato, Camarines Sur, Region 5	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	10,859.00	
Recipient Country Government	Local Government Unit of Bato, Camarines Sur, Region 5	Grant	Investment mobilized	76,940.00	
Recipient Country Government	Provincial Government of Pangasinan, Region I	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	3,464,040.00	
Recipient Country Government	Local Government Unit of Dasol, Region I	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	102,368.00	
Recipient Country Government	Local Government Unit of Dasol, Region I	Grant	Investment mobilized	100,200.00	

Recipient Country Government	Local Government Unit of Burgos, Region I	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	339,259.00	
Recipient Country Government	Local Government Unit of Agno, Region I	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	73,999.00	
Recipient Country Government	Local Government Unit of Agno, Region I	Grant	Investment mobilized	79,000.00	
Recipient Country Government	Local Government of Pio Duran, Albay, Region 5	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	130,768.00	
Recipient Country Government	Local Government of Pio Duran, Albay, Region 5	Grant	Investment mobilized	99,240.00	
Recipient Country Government	Local Government of Balatan, Region 5	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	1,277.00	
Recipient Country Government	Local Government of Balatan, Region 5	Grant	Investment mobilized	48,629.00	
Recipient Country Government	The Philippines, Tubbataha Reef National Park – Protected Area Management Board	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	155,321.00	
Recipient Country Government	The Philippines, Tubbataha	Grant	Investment mobilized	345,000.00	

	Reef National Park – Protected Area Management Board				
Recipient Country Government	Thailand, Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	4,966,890.00	1,283,576.00
Other	ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity	Grant	Investment mobilized	11,678,441.00	2,515,409.00
Other	ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	3,321,559.00	1,739,807.00
Other	Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA) Resource Facility	Grant	Investment mobilized	1,500,000.00	
Other	Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA) Resource Facility	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	500,000.00	298,498.00
GEF Agency	UNDP – Ocean Innovation Facility	Grant	Investment mobilized	1,850,000.00	
GEF Agency	UNDP – Ocean Innovation Facility	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	1,600,000.00	1,600,000.00

GEF Agency	UNDP – Bangkok Regional Hub	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	300,000.00	108,080.00
Total Co-financing				**57,907,646.00**	**1,708,080.00**

Comments

V: ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS

Overall Project/Program Risk Classification

PIF	CEO Endorsement/Approval	MTR	TE
High or Substantial	High or Substantial	High or Substantial	

Measures to address identified risks and impacts

UNDP Social and Environmental and Social Screening (SESP) has been delivered during the PPG stage. The SESP identifies a total of 12 risks associated with the project, 6 substantial risks and 6 moderate risks leading to overall risk-rating for the project is 'Substantial' reflecting the complexity of implementing marine protected area (MPA) networks and marine corridors across multiple countries and governance systems. The SESP calls for a number of assessments to be undertaken during the project implementation including ESIA and SESA, along with management plans including GAP, SEP and ESMP.

The most significant risks relate to: (i) potential environmental and social impacts arising from MPA network design and strengthened management regimes; (ii) adverse impacts on Indigenous Peoples' rights, territories, livelihoods, and cultural heritage; (iii) economic displacement resulting from restrictions on unsustainable resource use; (iv) climate change and disaster risks affecting marine ecosystems and project interventions; (v) child and forced labor risks associated with fisheries-related value chains; and (vi) potential damage to cultural heritage resources. Moderate risks include gender inequality and exclusion, biodiversity impacts from tourism and livelihood investments, occupational health and safety concerns, limitations in duty-bearer capacity to uphold human rights obligations, COVID-19 or similar public health disruptions, and risks associated with engagement of private sector partners.

To manage these risks, the project has adopted a comprehensive safeguards framework aligned with UNDP Social and Environmental Standards. Key mitigation measures include preparation and implementation of an Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF), Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework (IPPF), Stakeholder Engagement Plan, Gender Action Plan, country-level Strategic Environmental and Social Assessments (SESAs), and site-specific Environmental and Social Impact Assessments (ESIAs) where required. Additional safeguard instruments include Indigenous Peoples Plans (with Free, Prior and Informed Consent requirements), Livelihood Action Plans to address economic displacement, Health and Safety Plans, Environmental and Social Management Plans, grievance redress mechanisms, labor management procedures, and climate adaptation measures. The project also incorporates targeted capacity building, gender mainstreaming, stakeholder participation, and adaptive management approaches to reduce

risks while ensuring that conservation outcomes are achieved in a socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable manner.

An Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) and Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework (IPPF) have also been prepared during the PPG. The ESMF aimed to assist in the assessment and the management of potential environmental and social impacts. The framework forms the basis upon which Environmental and Social Management Plan(s) to be developed, so as to ensure full compliance with the requirements of UNDP's Social and Environmental Standards. The IPPF aims to set out the requirements of UNDP SES Standard 6 (Indigenous Peoples) in the preparation of three Indigenous Peoples Plans (IPPs) if the project established that indigenous peoples in project locations are present or will be affected by project activities.

During implementation, the project has experienced some delays in achieving key SES and safeguards-related milestones. Indonesia has made the most progress in this area. The SESA has been completed and has generated important findings related to environmental and social risks, stakeholder engagement, governance arrangements, gender considerations, Indigenous Peoples and local communities, and potential safeguards measures required for project implementation. However, despite the completion of the technical assessment, the SESA has not yet received formal approval. In Thailand, progress is ongoing but remains at an earlier stage. A consultant has been recruited to undertake the SESA, and the assessment process is currently underway. The Philippines has experienced the most significant delays in this area. Due largely to the prolonged delays associated with securing the SPA, safeguards-related activities, including the SESA process, could not commence as originally planned; SESA in the Philippines has just started with data collection stage. The delays in completing and approving the SESA processes have implications for project implementation, particularly on advancing the support and expanding networks of marine protected areas (MPAs) under Component 1.

An initial SEP was prepared during the PPG phase and provided the framework for stakeholder identification, engagement approaches, consultation mechanisms, and information disclosure processes across the participating countries. During implementation, the project recognized the need to update and refine the SEP to reflect evolving implementation realities, stakeholder landscapes, and country-specific circumstances. In Indonesia, the SEP has been reviewed and updated to incorporate findings from stakeholder consultations, safeguards assessments, and implementation experiences. In Thailand, the process of updating the SEP is still currently underway. The revision process is being undertaken in parallel with other safeguards activities, including the SESA, to ensure consistency between stakeholder engagement approaches and the emerging social and environmental findings. In the Philippines, progress has been delayed. Nevertheless, preparations are underway for the validation of the SEP through stakeholder consultations and engagement processes.

Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework (IPPF) was developed during the PPG stage for all countries. Indigenous Peoples Plan (IPP) drafted only in Indonesia during implementation, which is due for validation. No IPP developed in Thailand and the Philippines yet.

The project has made gradual progress in implementing Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) processes across the participating countries, although progress remains uneven and several key milestones are still pending. In Indonesia, Kepulauan Togean National Park, FPIC consultations were completed and formal FPIC agreements have been signed with the relevant communities. In Wakatobi National Park, consultations have also been conducted and the FPIC process is at an advanced stage, with agreements currently being prepared for formal signing.

In Thailand, progress towards securing FPIC is ongoing. The project has initiated consultations with relevant stakeholders and communities and is continuing the engagement process required to meet FPIC requirements.

In the Philippines, progress has been slower due to the delays. Activities are currently underway to complete documentation and consultation requirements, while validation activities with the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) are being scheduled. Engagement with the NCIP will be a critical step in ensuring that FPIC processes are implemented in accordance with national regulations and the rights of Indigenous Peoples.

To date, ESIAs have not been undertaken in any of the three participating countries. This is largely attributable to the limited progress made thus far in implementing the on-the-ground interventions that would trigger the need for project-specific impact assessments. The delay in ESIA preparation is closely linked to the status of several key project outputs under Outputs 2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.1.3, 2.1.4 and 2.2.2. While the absence of ESIAs is understandable given the current status of project implementation, there is a growing need to initiate ESIA planning and preparation processes as soon as possible. Experience from other projects demonstrates that environmental and social assessment processes can require significant time for scoping, data collection, stakeholder consultations, review, approval, and integration of mitigation measures into project design. Waiting until interventions are fully designed before commencing ESIA processes could create additional implementation bottlenecks and further delay the rollout of project activities.

Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM)

The project has made progress in establishing GRMs to support transparency, accountability, and stakeholder participation in accordance with the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) developed during the Project Preparation Grant (PPG) phase. A project-level GRM was drafted during the early stages of implementation to provide stakeholders with accessible channels for raising concerns, submitting complaints, and seeking resolution of issues related to project activities.

Indonesia has made the most progress in operationalizing the GRM. The project has adopted and localized the grievance mechanism, integrating it with existing local customary and Indigenous governance systems where appropriate. In Thailand and the Philippines, the GRM framework is still undergoing validation and refinement. While the establishment of the GRM framework represents an important safeguards achievement, implementation remains incomplete at the regional level. The project will need to finalize validation processes in Thailand and the Philippines and ensure that the mechanisms become fully operational, widely communicated, and actively monitored.

The effectiveness of a GRM depends not only on the existence of formal procedures but also on stakeholders being aware of their rights and understanding how and where grievances can be raised. The MTR noted that awareness of the GRM among community members and local stakeholders remains uneven. Similar challenges are anticipated in Thailand and the Philippines, where GRM validation processes are still ongoing. At present, there is limited evidence that the GRM has been systematically communicated to all stakeholder groups, particularly local communities, Indigenous Peoples, women, youth, and other potentially vulnerable groups who may be affected by project interventions.

To strengthen safeguards implementation, the project should place greater emphasis on proactively communicating the existence and purpose of the GRM through stakeholder consultations, community meetings, training activities, information materials, and project communication channels. Consideration should also be given to ensuring that GRM information is available in appropriate local languages and presented in formats that are accessible to different stakeholder groups. Community members should have a clear understanding of how grievances can be submitted, what types of concerns can be raised, how

complaints will be handled, and the expected timelines for response and resolution. The MTR further highlights the importance of regularly monitoring the functionality and effectiveness of the GRM, including tracking stakeholder awareness, accessibility, responsiveness, and satisfaction with the grievance resolution process.

To date, there have been no formal complaints lodged through the GRM mechanism.

VI. ANNEX

Uploaded Document

Document Category	Prefix	Title
M and E Document	Tracking Tool	6375_ENMAPS_Annex 21_GEF8_Core_Indicator_Reporting_ Template_for submission_R4_updated at MTR
M and E Document	Mid-term Review (MTR)	GEF10873_UNDP6375_FY25_ASEAN_ MFA_FSP
Project Supporting Document	ESS Supporting Document	6375_ENMAPS_Annex 04_SESP_NCE cleared_R1_for submission
Project Supporting Document	ESS Supporting Document	6375_Pre-SESP_for Submission_13Sept21_cleared