PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

Project ID:	10573
Project Name:	Blue Horizon: Ocean Relief through Seaweed Aquaculture
Countr(ies):	Regional
Implementing Agency:	WWF-US

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I. Overview

A. Description

Project name
Blue Horizon: Ocean Relief through Seaweed Aquaculture

Country
Regional

GEF ID	Implementing Agency
10573	WWF-US

Executing Entity
SEAFDEC, BFAR (Philippines), MARD/D-fish (VN)

Trust Fund	Project Type
GET	FSP
PIR Submission	Fiscal Year , PIR Number
9/8/2025	FY 2025 , 1st PIR

Objective
To create new sustainable seaweed value chains that will deliver ecosystem services and provide socioeconomic benefits

B. Ratings and Disbursements

Implementation Progress	Development Objective
Not Rated	Not Rated

Overall risk
NA

Project Financing	Cumulative Disbursement
6,540,000.00	65,659.00

C. Key Dates

CEO Endorsement/Approval	Agency Approval
7/11/2022	5/1/2024
Implementation Start	First Disbursement
4/26/2024	5/7/2024

Expected MTR 12/31/2026	Actual MTR
Expected Completion 6/30/2029	Actual Completion

II. PROGRESS STATUS AND ISSUES

A. Progress: Information on progress and outcomes of project implementation activities

At the regional level, the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC) has completed the establishment of the Project Management Unit (PMU) with the recruitment of key project personnel, including the Project Manager/Technical Advisor, Administrative Officer, and Technical Specialist, all of whom are now on board. The PMU has advanced several activities under Component 1 and 4, including the following:

- Drafting and approval of the annual workplan and budget.
- Finalizing the Terms of Reference for the Regional Seaweed Technical Working Group (S-TWG), incorporating gender mainstreaming considerations. Obtaining Governing Council approval, securing member nominations, and organizing the first S-TWG meeting have been carried forward to Year 2.

- Development of a draft Knowledge Management and Communication Strategy.
- Hosting monthly coordination meetings, which include SEAFDEC/AQD, the executing agencies from both the Philippines and Viet Nam, and the WWF GEF Agency.

B. Challenges: Information on challenges of project implementation activities

The project is experiencing delays in implementation, with national approval processes in both the Philippines and Viet Nam requiring significant time. In the Philippines, the Special Presidential Authority (SPA) for the project was received January 2025, and the grant agreement was signed 1 July 2025. In Viet Nam, the review and approval process has been delayed due to recent merging of government ministries, which requires additional internal consultation.

While a more ambitious Year 1 workplan was prepared at the regional level, this was delayed due to a longer regional PMU recruitment process (several rounds of postings were required for some positions), and delays in the signing of grant agreements by the Philippines and Viet Nam.

C. Stakeholder Engagement

As the project has been focused on start-up activities, progress against the stakeholder engagement plan has been limited. To date, activities have focused primarily on key regional-level engagements, including a presentation at the Fifty-seventh Meeting of the SEAFDEC Council (57CM), and monthly coordination calls amongst the executing partners.

In line with the project document, PMU SEAFDEC has developed a list of potential key stakeholders to be engaged in future project activities, including experts from Member Countries.

D. Gender Equality

The Gender Analysis and Gender Action Plan were developed during the project preparation phase, and these considerations are now being integrated into the project's activities. At the regional level, SEAFDEC has actively ensured that gender mainstreaming considerations are included in the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Regional Seaweed Technical Working Group (S-TWG), invitations, and the draft Knowledge Management and Communication Strategy.

E. Knowledge Management

SEAFDEC has developed a draft Knowledge Management and Communication Strategy. Inputs from the National PMUs of the Philippines and Viet Nam will be incorporated in the next version to ensure broader representation and alignment with country-level priorities.

Implementation of the Strategy, including establishment of the project website, is expected in the upcoming fiscal year.

III: Minor Amendments

CONTEXT	
Result Framework	
Components and Cost	
Institutional And Implementation Arrangements	For the SEAFDEC PMU, change the title of the Financial and Administrative Officer to Administrative Officer.This was decided based on recruitment experience and interested applicants. SEAFDEC has an established Finance Division with dedicated finance staff who will be responsible for financial management, compliance, and reporting. No objection by WWF GEF January 22, 2025.
Financial Management	Following the due diligence assessment, and in agreement with the three project partners and GEF Secretariat, it was agreed that WWF US would sign three separate grant agreements with each of the partners. A memorandum was developed and finalized with SEAFDEC on 26 January 2024 to outline the changes. This was decided based on recruitment experience and interested applicants. SEAFDEC has an established Finance Division with dedicated finance staff who will be responsible for financial management, compliance, and reporting. WWF

	US approved and gave no objection to the ToR of Administrative Officer on 22 January 2025.
Implementation Schedule	Activities in the Philippines and Viet Nam will start based on grant agreement signature with on 21 April 2025 (BFAR/PH)
Executing Entity	
Executing Entity Category	
Minor Project Objective Change	
Safeguards	
Risk Analysis	
Increase of GEF Financing up to 5%	
Co-Financing	
Location of Project Activity	
others	

IV: Geographic Coordinates of Project Activities

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
SEAFDEC Bangkok Office	13.5693622	100.57226279	

Location Description:

Regional PMU host

Activity Description:

V. ANNEX

Uploaded Document

Document Category	Title
M and E Document	WWF GEF Seaweed_1st PIR FY 25