PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

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

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. OVERVIEW 3
A. Description 3
B. Ratings and Disbursements 3
C. Key Dates 3
II. PROGRESS STATUS AND ISSUES 4
A. Progress: Information on progress and outcomes of project implementation activities 4
B. Challenges: Information on challenges of project implementation activities 5
C. Stakeholder Engagement 5
D. Gender Equality 6
E. Knowledge Management 7
III: MINOR AMENDMENTS 7
IV: GEOGRAPHIC COORDINATES OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES 8
V. ANNEX 9

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
9/15/2026	FY 2026 , 2nd 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
Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Overall risk
Moderate Risk

Project Financing	Cumulative Disbursement
6,540,000.00	400,000.00

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 6/30/2027	Actual MTR
Expected Completion 6/30/2030	Actual Completion

II. PROGRESS STATUS AND ISSUES

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

While most regional activities have been successfully implemented on time, several activities have been carried forward due to finalizing the Grant Agreement in Viet Nam and the ongoing establishment of the National Project Management Unit (NPMU) in the Philippines. In addition, the transfer of grant funds from WWF US to the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) has been delayed due to banking administrative issues, affecting the implementation timeline of some national and regional activities.

Important progress has advanced in both the Philippines and Viet Nam over the past fiscal year. In the Philippines, BFAR hosted the 2nd Project Steering Committee meeting in Palawan, which included a visit to a local farm site. Additionally, BFAR has also started interviewing applicants for the PMU positions, and hiring will commence once the funds are received. In Viet Nam, following the required government process, the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment officially approved the project in March 2026, with the document signed by Vice Minister Phùng Đức Tiến. The Department of Fisheries and Surveillance (DFiS) has since interviewed and selected applicants for the PMU, who will be hired once the grant agreement is signed and funds are disbursed. BFAR and DFiS have demonstrated strong commitment throughout this phase of the project, actively participating in Project Steering Committee meetings and coordination efforts, while dedicated staff have supported progress toward implementation.

This remainder of the report focuses on the progress of regional activities undertaken by SEAFDEC (Component 1 and 4). The SEAFDEC Secretariat has maintained close coordination with BFAR Philippines, the Department of Fisheries and Surveillance of Viet Nam (DFiS), and SEAFDEC/AQD to ensure continued alignment and implementation of Components 1 and 4. A summary of the progress achieved under Components 1 and 4 is presented below:

Component 1: Regional Approach and Capacity for Seaweed Value Chains in Southeast Asia

During the reporting period, under Component 1, the SEAFDEC PMU successfully convened two meetings of the Regional Seaweed Technical Working Group (S-TWG) in Bangkok (November 2025 and May 2026). The two meetings served as key consultation platforms to review the proposed outputs and draft outlines. Technical comments and recommendations from the S-TWG members and the Global Seaweed Coalition were incorporated into the consultants' work plans and the development of the project deliverables.

Key achievements include:

a. Output 1.1.1 (completed): Significant progress was made through the establishment of the Regional Seaweed Technical Working Group (S-TWG), comprising seaweed experts nominated by SEAFDEC Member Countries. The Terms of Reference (ToR) of the S-TWG was endorsed by the Project Steering Committee (PSC), with gender mainstreaming integrated into its governance structure and functions.

b. Outputs 1.1.2 and 1.1.3: The recruitment of consultants to develop the Guide to Promoting a Sustainable Seaweed Industry in Southeast Asia and the Regional Principles and Toolkit on Responsible and Safe Seaweed Aquaculture is

being finalized. Consequently, both outputs have been carried forward and are expected to be completed during the first quarter of AWPB Year 3.

Component 4: Knowledge Management, Monitoring & Evaluation, and IW:LEARN (Regional)

In collaboration with BFAR/Philippines and DFiS/Viet Nam counterpart, the SEAFDEC PMU organized two Project Steering Committee (PSC) meetings in Bangkok (November 2025) and Palawan, Philippines (March 2026), providing strategic guidance, approval of AWPB Year 3 for SEAFDEC PMU, and maintaining project momentum.

Key accomplishments are summarized below:

a. Output 4.1.1: The project strengthened its engagement with IW:LEARN by sharing project updates and maintaining project information on the IW:LEARN platform. Preparations for participation in the 11th GEF Biennial International Waters Conference (IWC11) in Bali, Indonesia (October 2026) have progressed, with the PMU submitting an Expression of Interest to organize a side event and participate in the conference.

b. Output 4.1.2: The Knowledge Management and Communication Strategy, incorporating gender mainstreaming considerations, has been finalized following consultations with BFAR, DFiS, and WWF US. The project website is now fully operational and regularly disseminates project information while being linked to the SEAFDEC Secretariat's website. In addition, the project's Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) has been finalized.

c. Output 4.2.1: Following the Project Inception Workshop held in August 2025, the Project Steering Committee (PSC) was formally established, with senior representatives nominated by BFAR/Philippines and DFiS Viet Nam. The Adaptive Management (Pause and Reflection) Workshop and the Regional Monitoring & Evaluation and Communication Training have been rescheduled to AWPB Year 3, pending the establishment of the National Project Management Units and completion of key staff recruitment in Viet Nam and the Philippines.

d. The project's Gender Action Plan (GAP) was endorsed and approved by the PSC and continues to guide the integration of gender equality and social inclusion across all project components and implementation activities.

B. Challenges: Information on challenges of project implementation activities

- Given the differing implementation timelines across the project components, with national-level activities under Components 2 and 3 commencing later than the regional and coordination activities under Components 1 and 4, maintaining a fully coherent regional approach has presented a challenge. This sequencing has affected the timing and alignment of certain regional activities, requiring ongoing coordination and adaptive planning.

- At the regional level, the SEAFDEC PMU anticipates implementation challenges in coordinating diverse national priorities, institutional arrangements, and contexts across Southeast Asia. Component 1 will need to accommodate differences in policy frameworks, seaweed production level, stakeholder needs, and levels of technical readiness in the region, which can affect the pace of developing and validating regional outputs. The SEAFDEC PMU will therefore maintain continuous consultation and coordination with national partners and technical experts to ensure that regional activities are inclusive, context-responsive, and relevant to all SEAFDEC member countries.

C. Stakeholder Engagement

- Under Component 1, progress has been made in strengthening partnerships, particularly through the recruitment of two consultants two develop Output 1.1.2 and 1.1.3 and project's strategic collaboration with STWG seaweed experts and the Global Seaweed Coalition (GSC), which has become

a key technical partner under Component 1. GSC has provided substantial technical inputs to the development of the *Guide to Promoting a Sustainable Seaweed Industry in Southeast Asia* and the *Regional Principles and Toolkit on Responsible and Safe Seaweed Aquaculture*, helping align these outputs with international best practices and sustainability standards.

- Under Component 4, the project continues to strengthen collaboration with IW/LEARN to enhance knowledge sharing, visibility, and outreach of project achievements at regional and global levels. During the reporting period, project updates and key milestones were actively disseminated through the IW platform and project website including through LinkedIn platform by Global Seaweed Coalition, resulting in increased visibility and broader engagement with stakeholders across the International Waters community.

- The project team will participate in the 11th GEF Biennial International Waters Conference (IWC11) which will be held from 19 to 22 October 2026 in Bali, Indonesia.

- The Project's Knowledge Management and Communication Plan has been finalized, providing a strategic framework to guide communication, outreach, and knowledge-sharing activities across all executing partners. Aligned with GEF knowledge management and communication standards, the Plan establishes a common approach for stakeholder engagement, dissemination of project outputs, and promotion of project achievements. It also strengthens the visibility and uptake of project results, best practices, and lessons learned, ensuring effective knowledge exchange and broader impact including gender mainstreaming strategies throughout the project implementation period.

D. Gender Equality

- The Gender Action Plan (GAP) has been approved by the members of Project Steering Committee and presented to the Seaweed Technical Working Group.

- The project applies the GAP to all project cycles.

- The project plans to organize a briefing meeting to the consultants responsible for Outputs 1.1.2 and 1.1.3 on the Project Gender Action Plan (GAP). This engagement aims to ensure that gender equality, social inclusion, and the meaningful participation of women seaweed farmers and vulnerable groups are effectively integrated into the development of the Guide and Regional Principles.

- The GAP will be also shared during M&E and Communication training sessions to National PMUs in the Philippines and Viet Nam.

- A total of 148 participants took part in SEAFDEC PMU-led activities during AWPB Year 2, comprising 73 men (49%) and 75 women (51%). This balanced participation reflects the project's commitments to gender mainstreaming.

E. Knowledge Management

Significant progress has been made in implementing the Knowledge Management and Communications approach at the regional level. This has been underpinned by the development and finalization of a Knowledge Management and Communications Plan, and complementary communication guidance for the National PMUs in the Philippines and Viet Nam, which support the consistent application of WWF GEF communication standards, knowledge dissemination, and project visibility requirements. This is also aligned with the project's gender action plan.

Key communications include the following:

1. Publication of project news and articles on the SEAFDEC website

   a. IW:LEARN website: https://iwlearn.net/regional-alliance-advancing-sustainable-seaweed-aquaculture-in-southeast-asia
   b. SEAFDEC website: https://www.seafdec.org/southeast-asia-advances-sustainable-seaweed-industry-at-regional-technical-meeting/
   c. SEAFDEC website: https://www.seafdec.org/seafdecs-blue-horizon-project-visit-to-the-queen-sirikit-marine-farm-study-centre-petchaburi-thailand/
   d. Project website: https://bluehorizonseaweed.org/2026/05/southeast-asia-advances-sustainable-seaweed-industry-at-regional-technical-meeting/
   e. Project website: https://bluehorizonseaweed.org/2026/05/project-visit-to-the-queen-sirikit-marine-farm-study-centre-petchaburi/
   f. LinkedIn post by Global Seaweed Coalition: https://www.linkedin.com/posts/bluehorizon-ugcPost-7458153400338395136-SeeC?utm_source=social_share_send&utm_medium=member_desktop_web&rcm=ACoAABfQFI8BEUf0UbCtT6CLAktMUPNfmnN4vdw
   g. SEAFDEC Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1C7sEFsj3y/
   h. SEAFDEC website: https://www.seafdec.org/seafdec-and-bfar-visit-seaweed-farming-community-in-palawan/
   i. SEAFDEC website: https://www.seafdec.org/the-2nd-project-steering-committee-meeting-convene-in-palawan-to-accelerate-sustainable-seaweed-industry-in-southeast-asia/ https://www.seafdec.org/the-2nd-project-steering-committee-meeting-convene-in-palawan-to-accelerate-sustainable-seaweed-industry-in-southeast-asia/
   j. Project website: https://bluehorizonseaweed.org/2026/03/2nd-project-steering-committee-meeting-palawan-to-accelerate-sustainable-seaweed-industry-in-southeast-asia/
   k. Project website: https://bluehorizonseaweed.org/2026/03/blue-horizon-team-visit-community-calamianes-seaweed-marketing-cooperative/
   l. IW:LEARN website: https://iwlearn.net/regional-seaweed-collaboration-strengthened

2. Project website: https://bluehorizonseaweed.org/

3. An updated Project Profile Published on the IW:LEARN Platform (https://iwlearn.net/iw-projects/10573)

III: Minor Amendments

CONTEXT	
Result Framework	

Components and Cost	
Institutional And Implementation Arrangements	
Financial Management	
Implementation Schedule	
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:

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Bangkok	13.843311	100.575530	

Location Description:

SEAFDEC HQ (regional activities)

Activity Description:

V. ANNEX

Uploaded Document

Document Category	Title
M and E Document	2nd PIR_Blue Horizon SEAFDEC_Results Framework and Workplan Tracking
Document Category	Title
M and E Document	WWF GEF Blue Horizon Seaweed Aquaculture PIR Y2