

PROCEEDINGS

THE FINAL REGIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE (RSC) MEETING OF THE ATSEA-2 PROJECT

Denpasar, Bali, Indonesia | 10 December 2024

**PROCEEDINGS
FINAL MEETING OF THE
REGIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE/PROJECT BOARD
Implementation of the Arafura and Timor Seas Regional and
National Strategic Action Programs (ATSEA-2)
PROJECT ID: (PIMS) 5439
DATE: December 10, 2023**

1. PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES AND MEETING AGENDA

| Issue/Topic | Objectives |
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| Highlights of Project Accomplishments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To provide the RSC with overall or key accomplishments of the project at the regional and per country level since ATSEA-2's initiation in 2019 ● To seek further guidance from the RSC on the remaining work to be completed before the project closure on 31 December 2024 |
| Project Terminal Evaluation Results and Recommendations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To review the results and recommendations from the Terminal Evaluation and identify actions in response to the recommendations |
| Exit and Sustainability Strategy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To review the assessment of results and recommendations from the Exit or Sustainability Strategy, and to seek further guidance on implementing the strategy, with the aim of ensuring a smooth transition from the current ATSEA-2 project to the long-term ATSEA program under the direction of the RGM |
| Next Steps to Transition to Long-term ATSEA Program and RGM | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To receive updates from the countries on preparations for the transition to RGM including country commitments in support of the Regional Secretariat operationalization and initial implementation of the ATS SAP 2024-2033. |

Final RSC Meeting Agenda

| Time | Agenda No. | Agenda Item |
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| 08:00 - 09:00 | | Registration of Participants |
| 09:00 - 09:30 | | Opening of the Final RSC Meeting 2024 Welcome Remarks <i>Mr. Iwan Kurniawan</i> <i>Manager, Natural Resource Management</i> <i>UNDP Indonesia</i> Opening Remarks <i>Dr. I Nyoman Radiarta, MSc</i> <i>Chairperson of the Agency for Marine and Fisheries Extension and Human</i> <i>Resource Development, MMAF, Indonesia</i> |
| 09:30 - 09:45 | | Group Photo |
| 09:45 - 10:15 | 1.0 | Organizational Matters 1.1 Election of Chair and Co-Chair 1.2 Introduction of Delegates 1.3 Adoption of the RSC Meeting Agenda |
| 10:15 - 11:15 | 2.0 | Highlights of Project Accomplishments 2.1 Indonesia 2.2 Papua New Guinea 2.3 Timor-Leste 2.4 Australia 2.5 Regional |
| 11:15 - 11:45 | 3.0 | Terminal Evaluation Results and Recommendations |
| 11:45 - 12:15 | 4.0 | Exit/Sustainability Strategy |
| 12:15 - 13:30 | | Lunch Break |
| 13:30 - 14:30 | 5.0 | Next Steps to Transition to Long-term ATSEA Program and RGM |
| 14:30 - 15:00 | | Closing of the Final RSC Meeting 2024 |

2. DISCUSSION OF ISSUES & DECISIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

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| | <p>Overview</p> <p>The Final Regional Steering Committee (RSC) Meeting of the GEF/UNDP/PEMSEA Arafura and Timor Seas Ecosystem Action Phase 2 (ATSEA-2) Project was held on 10 December 2024 at the Trans Resort Seminyak Hotel in Bali, Indonesia. The meeting was hosted by the Government of Indonesia through the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries (MMAF).</p> <p>RSC members from Australia, Indonesia, and Papua New Guinea, as well as representatives from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA), participated in the meeting. Representatives from the UNDP Indonesia Country Office, serving as the Principal Project Representative, together with the UNDP Timor-Leste Country Office, and the UNDP Bangkok Regional Hub attended on behalf of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and UNDP. PEMSEA, as the executing agency for the Regional and Papua New Guinea components of the project, was also in attendance.</p> <p>The Regional Project Management Unit (RPMU) and the National Coordination Unit (NCU) of Indonesia served as the Secretariat for the meeting. In total, 41 participants attended the meeting, including 19 men and 22 women.</p> |

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| | <p>Opening Ceremony</p> <p>Welcome Remarks by UNDP Indonesia Delivering remarks on behalf of UNDP Indonesia as ATSEA-2’s Principal Project Representative, Mr. Iwan Kurniawan welcomed participants to the Final Regional Steering Committee (RSC) Meeting of the GEF/UNDP ATSEA-2 Project. He conveyed apologies for the absence of UNDP Indonesia’s Resident Representative due to unavoidable commitments.</p> <p>Mr. Kurniawan reaffirmed UNDP’s commitment to supporting the sustainability and transition of the ATSEA Program, highlighting its evolution from a project-based initiative to a transformative regional collaboration. He commended the achievements of ATS countries and their dedication to establishing a formal Regional Governance Mechanism (RGM), as endorsed in the recent Sydney Ministerial Declaration.</p> <p>The Declaration underscored the commitment of Australia, Indonesia, and Papua New Guinea to integrate the ATS Strategic Action Programme (SAP) and National Action Programmes (NAPs) into national plans and budgets, support governance structures through financial and in-kind contributions, and provide bridge financing for the Regional Secretariat.</p> <p>Mr. Kurniawan outlined the importance of securing diverse funding sources to sustain the program and enable the implementation of the ATS SAP 2024-2033, including advancing efforts for submission of ATSEA-3 project under GEF8 and fostering other collaborative efforts. He highlighted the significance of the meeting in marking the operational closure of ATSEA-2 while facilitating the transition to the long-term RGM.</p> <p>He concluded by encouraging discussions on the project’s key achievements, lessons learned, and Terminal Evaluation recommendations, emphasizing the importance of a seamless transition to the RGM and continued regional collaboration for a sustainable and resilient ATS.</p> <p>Opening Remarks by MMAF Indonesia On behalf of Indonesia’s Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries (MMAF), Dr. I Nyoman Radiarta, MSc, Chairperson of the Agency for Marine and Fisheries Extension and Human Resource Development, delivered the Welcome Remarks through a pre-recorded video message.</p> <p>Dr. Radiarta expressed Indonesia’s honor in hosting the Final Regional Steering Committee (RSC) Meeting of the GEF/UNDP ATSEA-2 Project, celebrating the culmination of five years of collaboration among Arafura and Timor Seas (ATS) countries. He highlighted the Sydney Ministerial Declaration, signed the previous week, as a reaffirmation of the shared vision for a “healthy, resilient, and productive ATS.”</p> <p>He acknowledged the project’s significant achievements, including the expansion of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), sustainable fisheries management, and enhanced coastal and small island management. In particular, he cited key outcomes in Indonesia which included the establishment of the Kolepom Island MPA, implementation of Ecosystem-Based Fisheries Management in Aru and Merauke, and the formation of community-based surveillance groups (Pokmaswas). Additionally, ATSEA-2 contributed to local economic development, strengthened climate resilience, and addressed marine pollution while</p> |

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| | <p>empowering communities and women through alternative livelihood programs and integrated coastal management (ICM).</p> <p>Dr. Radiarta emphasized Indonesia’s commitment to continuing the partnership under the ATS Strategic Action Program (SAP) and aligning efforts with the UN Sustainable Development Goals. He called for ongoing collaboration to ensure the sustainability of ATSEA-2’s outcomes for the benefit of the environment and regional communities.</p> <p>He concluded by welcoming all delegates, expressing optimism for productive discussions, and formally opening the meeting.</p> |
| 1 | <p>Organizational Matters</p> <p>The Meeting confirmed Mr. Eko Rudianto, Principal Fisheries Inspector of the Directorate General for Surveillance of MMAF, Indonesia, as the Meeting Chair. Considering the short agenda for the RSC meeting, the Meeting agreed not to elect a Co-chair. The Chair was accompanied by the Secretariat (the ATSEA-2 Regional Project Management Unit/RPMU), represented by Dr. Handoko Adi Susanto, Regional Project Manager of the ATSEA-2 Project.</p> <p>Mr. Rudianto expressed his gratitude for being entrusted to preside over the milestone meeting following five years of challenging but immensely rewarding collaboration. He commended the collaborative efforts to implement the first Strategic Action Programme (SAP) for the Arafura and Timor Seas (ATS) region, advancing sustainable development and fostering regional cooperation. He congratulated everyone for their contributions, commitment, and dedication, and proceeded to invite the RSC members to introduce their respective delegations.</p> <p>The Heads of Delegation of each country and the implementing and executing agencies/partners and the project team expressed appreciation to the Government of Indonesia for hosting the Final RSC meeting, highlighting it as the beginning of a new phase in the ATSEA collaboration, building on the momentum from the just-concluded Ministerial Forum in Sydney.</p> <p>Dr. Susanto presented the meeting agenda which was confirmed and formally adopted by the Meeting.</p> |
| 2 | <p>Issue: Highlights of Project Accomplishments</p> <p>2.1 Indonesia (Presenter: Ms. Yayan Hikmayani, National Project Director for ATSEA-2 Indonesia) (LINK TO MEETING DOCUMENT; LINK TO PPT)</p> <p>Presentation Overview:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ms. Yayan Hikmayani, ATSEA-2 National Project Director of Indonesia, presented the highlights of the project accomplishments from Indonesia. ● The Component 1 (Governance) End of Project (EOP) highlights from Indonesia include the successful completion of the National Action Programme (NAP), which has been aligned with various national and regional planning and budget frameworks. Indonesia also signed the Sydney Ministerial Declaration alongside Australia and Papua New Guinea, formalizing the Regional Governance Mechanism (RGM), and an Exit and Sustainability Strategy and Plan has been developed. The formalization of the National |

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| | <p>Interministerial Committee (NIMC) is still ongoing and is under review by the Legal Bureau of MMAF. Interim operation of the NIMC was supported by the establishment of six working groups to address critical issues. The NAP Financing Plan has been completed and will support the 25% target for the finance required for the SAP, including a comprehensive financing plan that also supports the Regional Secretariat. A Ministerial Decree on Kolepom Island and four local regulations have been developed and adopted, with a draft Integrated Coastal Management (ICM) regulation nearing completion. The program has successfully trained 1,072 beneficiaries, and the Climate Change Toolkit has been endorsed, following its trial in Oeseli Village, Rote Ndao.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● On the Component 2 (Improving Large Marine Ecosystem (LME) Carrying Capacity) EOP targets, some highlights from Indonesia include the development of Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM) plans, with six companies actively participating in Fishery Improvement Projects (FIP), supported by training, the implementation of e-logbooks, and the establishment of four community-based surveillance group (POKMASWAS). Efforts to register vessels in Aru are ongoing, while the target for Merauke has been successfully achieved. The ICM plan and oil spill early warning system for Rote Ndao has been completed, and the target METT score for Southeast Aru has been successfully achieved. Furthermore, both men and women from 10 women’s groups have been trained and benefited from alternative livelihood programs. ● In terms of financial delivery, out of the US\$522,870.75 approved budget for 2024, the expenditure as of December 2024 is at US\$424,002.84 (81%) based on the Combined Delivery Report (CDR). With regard to the 5-year budget, out of the US\$3,180,000 total budget for the Indonesia component, the cumulative expenditure as of December 2024 is at US\$3,081,132 (97%). ● Ms. Hikmayani also shared key lessons learned, highlighting the importance of a collaborative framework, a localized approach, and community empowerment. She emphasized the need for a clear legal and institutional framework to accelerate implementation and the integration of Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) to ensure that all community members benefit equally. Ms. Hikmayani also highlighted the importance of data-driven decision-making, continuous capacity building, integrated approaches, regional cooperation to address transboundary issues, and sustainability planning early in the process. ● The remaining activities for December 2024 include the legalization of the NIMC and conduct of its first coordination meeting, the conduct of RCC and RSWG meetings hosted by Indonesia, and the process for the project closure. <p>2.2 Papua New Guinea (Presenter: Mr. Terence Kedamwana, Operational Focal Point for ATSEA-2 PNG) (LINK TO MEETING DOCUMENT; LINK TO PPT)</p> <p>Presentation Overview:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mr. Terence Kedamwana, ATSEA-2 Operational Focal Point for PNG, presented the summary of project accomplishments from PNG. ● With regard to the Component 1 (Governance) EOP targets, PNG has been progressing towards establishing the Regional Governance Mechanism (RGM) following the signing of the Sydney Ministerial Declaration during the Ministerial Forum on December 5, 2024, in Sydney, Australia. Immediately after the Forum, PNG's Managing Director also signed the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with PEMSEA to formalize financing commitments for the RGM during the bridging phase in 2025–2026 amounting to USD65,000/year. PNG’s National Action Programme (NAP) 2024-2033 |

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| | <p>has also been endorsed by the National Project Board (NPB), and key actions have been integrated into the work and budget plans of NFA, concerned agencies, and Western Province, with USD 2.1 committed for its 10-year implementation. PNG’s National Interministerial Committee (NIMC) and Stakeholder Partnership Forum (SPF) have also been consolidated into a unified body, providing technical guidance for the implementation of the Strategic Action Programme (SAP). In 2022, PNG, alongside other ATS countries, also endorsed the ‘ATS Regional Climate Change Guidance Toolkit: Guide for Facilitators and Decision Makers’, which builds upon the 2021 Regional Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment (CCVA).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Under Component 2 on improving LME carrying capacity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ PNG supported the review and endorsement of the Regional EAFM plan for red snapper alongside Indonesia and Timor-Leste and participated in the 2023 RBFM Regional Exchange in Darwin, Australia. PNG also supported the review and endorsement of the MPA Network Design and Roadmap through the RSC. And in the recent Oceans Meeting, PNG’s Minister declared a commitment to safeguarding ecosystems for future generations, aligning with regional conservation goals. ○ In support of sustainable fisheries management, the Fore Coast Artisanal Fisheries Management Plan (FAFMP) for South Fly District was developed, and was officially legalized in April 2024 through a local-level government (LLG) by-law. As PNG's first community-based fisheries management plan with an LLG Law, the FAFMP is designed to serve as a model for replication in other regions of the country in the future. ○ Fish Maw harvest baseline data has been updated and village recording initiated as part of FAFMP implementation. A management guideline for fish maw harvest has also been developed to regulate fishery while a management plan is being developed. ○ Training on community-based monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) is ongoing. Selected local stakeholders have received training to support periodic monitoring and fisheries data collection including on fish maw and type of fishing gears as part of FAFMP implementation. ○ With regard to the target on improved fishing gears, baseline data has been secured although no improvement has been seen yet since the FAFMP was formally launched only in October 2024. Current NFA regulations prohibit gill net mesh sizes over 6 inches. Baseline data collected in 2023 from sampled villages in South Fly indicate 35% of gill nets used are of prohibited sizes, while 65% comply with the standards. Artisanal fishing serves as the primary livelihood for 1,486 households across 14 villages in the Fore Coast of South Fly. The late inception of the project in PNG has delayed the effective enforcement of regulations but monitoring will be continued to assess progress toward the target. ● Overall, all end-of-project targets have been achieved, and PNG has transitioned into the long-term ATSEA program well through the commitments made in the Sydney Declaration and the MOA with PEMSEA. Local communities and stakeholders have been taking ownership of community-based fisheries management, while NFA has been embracing the community-based fisheries management implemented by ATSEA-2 as a pilot initiative in the country and plans to replicate in other coastal communities in the country. ● With regard to financial delivery, PNG has expended 65% (US\$69,766) of the approved budget for 2024 (US\$107,102) as of October; and 93% (US\$492,664) of the 5-year budget of US\$530,000 from 2019 to October 2024. ● On key lessons learned, PNG shared the same sentiment with Indonesia on the need for further capacity building to support effective intergovernmental coordination and |

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| | <p>multi-stakeholder and community-based initiatives, along with close coordination and constant communication, and empowering communities to take ownership and take action. In support of blue economy development, PNG highlighted the importance of complementing resource management with revenue generation activities such as alternative livelihoods to ensure sustainable economies while conserving the marine ecosystems.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Remaining activities for December 2024 include finalizing the process for the country contribution for 2025 and supporting the RPMU with necessary information for the final project report and articles for final publications as needed. <p>2.3 Timor-Leste Presenter: Mr. Pragyajan Jalambar Rei, Head of the Environment Unit (interim), UNDP Timor-Leste (LINK TO MEETING DOCUMENT; LINK TO PPT)</p> <p>Presentation Overview:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● On behalf of Timor-Leste National Project Board, Mr. Pragyajan Jalambar Rei, Head of the Environment Unit (ad interim) of UNDP Timor-Leste, presented the highlights of the ATSEA-2 project accomplishments in Timor-Leste from 2019 to 2024. ● Under Component 1 on Regional and National Governance, Timor-Leste has undertaken the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Completion of Timor-Leste’s National Action Programme (NAP) 2024-2033 in line with the ATS Strategic Action Programme (SAP) 2024-2033. The NAP and its associated Financing Plan is scheduled for review and adoption at the National Project Board meeting scheduled in December 2024. ○ Timor-Leste has been part of multistakeholder and Technical Working Group (TWG) consultations on the ATS Regional Governance Mechanism (RGM), as well as the updating of the SAP. Timor-Leste, along with other ATS countries endorsed the RGM structure and the SAP 2024-2033 in previous RSC meetings. In line with Timor-Leste’s support to the RGM, the country initially committed to allocate USD50,000 annually for the transition years of 2025 and 2026 for the operationalization of the Regional Secretariat. However, in line with the directive of the Prime Minister’s office, final adoption of the SAP and RGM, as well as Timor-Leste’s funding commitment are still pending, subject to further internal interministerial review in Timor-Leste to ensure alignment of the SAP with current government priorities. ○ In support of the ATSEA-2 project and SAP implementation, Timor-Leste has established and operationalized its National Interministerial Committee (NIMC) which is targeted for transition into a National Coordination Committee (NCC) once the RGM is formally adopted by Timor-Leste. ○ Since 2020, a total of 945 individuals in Timor-Leste have benefited from various regional and national ATSEA-2 trainings, including 457 men and 231 women, and 257 non-sex-disaggregated. ○ ATSEA-2 also supported the establishment of ICM Sub Task Team for PA Barique through an official order in 2020, followed by adoption of ICM Plan in January 2022 with a Declaration of Commitment for the Plan’s implementation. While two decrees, on the establishment of new MPA in Manufahi and Manatuto and formal establishment of the National Fisheries Advisory Committee, have been drafted and pending formal adoption. ● Under Component 2 on Improving LME Carrying Capacity, Timor-Leste has achieved the following: |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ EAFM Plan for Red Snappers in South Coast Municipalities have been adopted and supported by stock and value chain assessments. Several initiatives in support of RPOA-IUU fishing have been undertaken and resulted to achieving the target of 105 out of the total 2010 boats targeting demersal fish, including red snapper, already compliant with permitted gear regulations. Trainings on independent monitoring system as well as fiberglass boat construction and maintenance were carried out. ○ In support of pollution management, assessments on Marine and Land-based Pollution in South Coast (covering 4 municipalities) and Gaps in Legislation, Regulations, Information and Awareness on Marine Pollution have been completed, which includes the assessment on oil spill preparedness. Various trainings on oil spill preparedness and response were also carried out. A Draft oil spill early response systems and procedures has also been developed and is undergoing finalization. ○ With ATSEA-2's support, stakeholder consultations were conducted to assess the METT for Nino Konis Santana National Park (NKNP). From a METT score of 24 in 2016, the METT score is at 46 as of June 2023. ○ In line with sea turtle protection, Timor-Leste benefited in the regional workshops and regional exchange on sea turtle protection. The country also endorsed the Regional Plan of Action (RPOA) for enhanced protection of sea turtles in 2022. At the local level, a pilot project on community-based sea turtle protection combined with ecotourism and alternative livelihood initiative was undertaken in Com, Lautem Municipality, which included trainings and construction of turtle protection fence and turtle ponds, fish ponds, tree planting in the conservation area, handicraft training, and construction of a mini café in the conservation area. ○ In line with ICM Plan implementation in PA Barique, alternative livelihood initiatives linked with climate change adaptation were carried out. A total of 915 men, 936 women and 70 non-sex-disaggregated data have been capacitated and benefited from alternative livelihood initiatives of ATSEA-2 in Timor-Leste (i.e., establishment of women-led Tok Derek Cooperative, fish feed production, basic cooperatives, financial accountability and management, drought resilient home gardens, and mangrove restoration and riverbank stabilization). ● Overall, Timor-Leste has accomplished majority of its targets and is hopeful that the Ministerial Decree for the new MPA in Manatuto to Manufahi will be formally adopted before the end of 2024. The work of ATSEA-2 in Timor-Leste has facilitated the development and adoption of essential policies and plans, including the National Ocean Policy (NOP), the EAFM and ICM Plan, and updated management plan for NKS National Park to promote sustainable resource management. Various trainings, awareness building and alternative livelihood initiatives have contributed to improving resilience and empowerment of women, as foundations for long-term biodiversity and community well-being. ● The experiences gained under ATSEA-2 brought significant lessons, such as: (a) consistent community engagement to enhance ownership, sustainability, and resilience, and close collaboration with different related government agencies proved essential for driving policy adoption and progress; (b) Changes in government structure and officials, particularly following national and local elections, necessitate re-sharing and provision of key project information and targets to secure buy-in and continuity of commitments; (c) continuous capacity building and advocacy combined with gender mainstreaming is crucial. ● For the remaining weeks of December 2024, Timor-Leste will focus on the conduct of its Final National Project Board meeting and adoption of ministerial decree on New MPA Manufahi – Manatuto. Noting the request from the Office of the Prime Minister |

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| | <p>for further in-country consultations on the new ATS SAP, with links to the final adoption of the Timor-Leste NAP, as well as the RGM, the project will continue to coordinate with relevant offices to provide necessary information or guidance that could facilitate better understanding of the new SAP and hopefully the eventual endorsement of the SAP by Timor-Leste and accession to the ATS Ministerial Declaration.</p> <p>2.4 Australia (Presenter: Dr. Andrew Chek, National Focal Point for ATSEA-2 in Australia)</p> <p>Presentation Overview:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Dr. Andrew Chek shared Australia’s key initiatives in support of the ATS Strategic Action Programme (SAP) 2024-2033. As Australia is not a beneficiary of the GEF project, his reflection focused on moving forward. ● Dr. Chek described the progress of the ATSEA-2 Project as a challenging yet collaborative journey. The early stages were marked by difficulties, including changes in Australia’s government and decision-making structures, which made it hard to connect with key stakeholders. However, these challenges have largely been resolved, particularly with the signing of the Ministerial Declaration, which has created an enabling environment and fostered stronger engagement and support from the government and stakeholders. The Ministerial Declaration is a major milestone, creating a solid foundation for collaboration among participating countries ● Demonstrating support for ATSEA, during the Global Nature Positive Summit 2024, Australia announced 1.4 million dollars (AUD) in funding to work on the issue of Abandoned, Lost, or Discarded Fishing Gear (ALDFG) in support of the new ATS Strategic Action Programme (SAP). Australia looks forward to working together with the other ATS countries in support of the SAP. ● Australia’s Sustainable Ocean Plan also committed to managing 100% of the country’s Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) as part of the High-Level Panel for Ocean commitments. The Coral Triangle Initiative (CTI) is also an area of interest for the government, with a focus on finding ways to synergize investments with ATSEA considering the common countries and overlapping priorities, to enhance efficiency and maximize their impacts while maintaining the distinct personalities of both programs. ● Dr. Chek shared that Australia is keen to keep the momentum going and looks forward to see ATSEA maintained. He underscored the importance of maintaining ATSEA’s visibility among decision-makers, particularly given the gap between ATSEA-1 and ATSEA-2, which made regaining recognition a challenge. Preserving knowledge and ensuring continuity are key priorities, and a flexible and adaptive approach is important, to be responsive to challenges and opportunities in place of rigid frameworks. ● Dr. Chek expressed gratitude to Indonesia for hosting the meeting and completing the full circle of the project. He also thanked the RPMU for the continued work, dedication and adaptability. Looking ahead beyond December 2024, and with their recognition that ‘ATSEA is the platform for getting things done’, Dr. Chek enjoined the countries and partners to continue working together to get things done. <p>2.5 Regional (Presenter: Dr. Handoko Adi Susanto, Regional Project Manager, ATSEA-2) (LINK TO MEETING DOCUMENT; LINK TO PPT)</p> |

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| | <p>Presentation Overview:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Dr. Handoko Adi Susanto, Regional Project Manager of the ATSEA-2 Project, presented the highlights of accomplishments of the regional component of the project from 2019 to 2024. ● At the Objective level, the key accomplishments include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Engagement of 157,170 beneficiaries (52,324 women, 60, 430 men, 44,412 non sex-aggregated), exceeding the target of 115,000 (55,000 women and 60,000 men). ○ On the target of up to 25% (by volume) for the ATS region, representing approximately 0.25% of global levels of globally over-exploited fisheries moved to more sustainable levels, Dr. Susanto explained that using Spawning Potential Ratio (SPR) and Virtual Population Analysis (VPA) as proxy for assessing the sustainability of red snapper stocks and steady-state biomass of red snapper in the ATS region, it has been shown that ATSEA-2 has met the objective by moving 1.38% of red snapper global catch to a more sustainable level. ○ For the EOP target on 800,000 ha of landscapes and seascapes under improved biodiversity management, around 815,564.9 ha were covered by MPA initiatives of ATSEA-2, including 640,964.9 ha in Indonesia and 174,600 in Timor-Leste. ● Under Component 1 on Regional, National and Local Governance for LME Management, all EOP targets were delivered including the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Adoption of the ATS Regional Governance Mechanism (RGM) through the Sydney Ministerial Declaration along with the updated Strategic Action Programme (SAP), financing plans, and RGM transition plan. ○ Updated Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) endorsed by the RSC in 2023, and updated SAP 2024-2033 endorsed by the RSC and signed by the Focal Ministers of Australia, Indonesia, and PNG, before its formal adoption through the Sydney Declaration. Supporting NAPs were developed and endorsed by NPBs. ○ 5-year SAP financing plan, and approximately 28% of estimated SAP financing committed by the countries and partners, exceeding the 25% EOP target. ○ Regional climate change (CC) vulnerability assessment, ATS regional CC guidance toolkit endorsed by RSC and tested in Oeseli village, Indonesia, and a paper on the CCVA and the toolkit published in the Climate Change Journal. ● Under Component 2 on Improving LME Carrying Capacity to Sustain Provisioning, Regulating and Supporting Ecosystem Services, the regional component completed the following in support of country level targets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ On improved management of fisheries: 1) Regional EAFM Plan for Red Snapper endorsed by Indonesia, PNG and Timor-Leste while Australia’s endorsement will be subject to the RGM establishment after the signing of the Ministerial Declaration; 2) Collaborative initiatives with the RPOA-IUU which resulted to the publication of four assessment reports on IUUF, conduct of Fisheries Intelligence Trainings, development of monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) training curriculum and data sharing mechanism, ATSEA’s participation in the annual RPOA-IUU Coordination Committee Meeting (CCM), and co-organization of the International Workshop on Advancing Regional Standards of Responsible Fisheries to Combat IUU fishing during the G20 Summit in Indonesia; 3) Regional Exchange on Right-based Fisheries Management (RBFM) in Darwin, Australia in 2023; and 4) article on IUUF illegal fishing baseline estimate published as part of ATSEA-2’s special issue for the Coastal Management Journal released in 2024. ○ On pollution reduction: 1) Publication of Assessment Report on Marine and Land-based Pollution in the ATS Region which highlighted oil spill and marine debris as one of the major issues due to the high presence of oil rigs and intensive fishing resulting to derelict fishing gears, and the lack of regional collaborative platform on oil spill preparedness and response (OSPR); 2) Collaborative initiatives with the |

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| | <p>Oil Spill Response Limited (OSRL) of Singapore on the conduct of quarterly virtual webinars on OSPR and conduct of a Regional Exchange in Singapore; and 3) completion of a paper on the increasing risk of oil spills and marine debris in the ATS as part of the ATSEA-2 Special Issue in the Coastal Management Journal published in 2024.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ On coastal and marine biodiversity conservation: 1) MPA Network Design and Roadmap and Regional Plan of Action (RPOA) for enhanced protection of sea turtles endorsed by the four countries; 2) Regional ecological profile; 3) Ecosystem Valuation Report; 4) Virtual Database and Information Management System (DIMS) training and online learning system; 5) Linkages with PEMSEA's SEA Knowledge Bank (SEAKB) and the Coral Triangle Atlas; 6) Regional status report on sea turtles; 7) Sea Turtle Expert Workshop; and 8) Regional Exchange on Sea Turtle Protection in Bali. ● For Component 3 on Knowledge Management: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A Theory of Change (TOC) was developed for the first SAP and the ATSEA-2 Project, and an ATS SAP Monitoring System Framework and training guide were developed to support monitoring of the status of the ATS and dissemination of information on progress of SAP implementation. ○ A total of 40 ATSEA-2 articles were also published via the GEF IW:LEARN portfolio bulletin, and the project released more than 160 technical publications which are accessible in the ATSEA-2 website. ATS or ATSEA-2 information have also been shared with other knowledge management platforms, particularly with the Coral Triangle Atlas and PEMSEA's SEAKB. Use of digital platforms was optimized, various knowledge products were released including quarterly newsletters and annual reports, and media relations were widened with a Journalist Fellowship Program. ATSEA-2 also published in several journals, beyond the Project Document requirement. The project has organized/co-organized around 200 events since 2019, and participated in previous GEF International Waters Conference (IWC) virtually during the COVID-19 period. In September 2024, ATSEA-2 participated in the 10th IWC in Uruguay and shared lessons, impacts, and future plans. ATSEA-2 was recognized in the event a best project example based on longevity, continuity of actions, and a balanced approach across regions, agencies, and themes. ● In support of Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI), the project has involved 2,327 women and 2,724 men beneficiaries from alternative livelihood initiatives in Indonesia and Timor-Leste, and a total of 4,336 beneficiaries from trainings comprised of 40% women. A Regional GESI Assessment and Action Plan was also developed, and GESI trainings and workshops conducted. ● Dr. Susanto highlighted that the past five-years of regional cooperation under the ATSEA-2 project has shown the value of ATSEA in ensuring: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Alignment – of the SAP and NAPs with national priorities and sustainable development commitments, and development of RGM that is fit for purpose; ○ Transformation – through increased awareness, knowledge and skills, and adoption and application of integrated management plans, programs and policies; ○ Synergies – with collaborative approach and multistakeholder engagement amplifying impacts, and an RGM to ensure long-term synergies of action; ○ Empowerment – of women and communities and increased community resilience through trainings and alternative livelihoods; and ○ Adaptation – through consideration of evolving environmental conditions and emerging challenges in management plans, and SAP ToC and M&E system to ensure SAP responsiveness and adaptability. ● As of October 2024, 66% of the 2024 regional budget of US\$621,771 and 95% of the 5-year budget of US\$3,915,662 have been delivered. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● On key lessons learned, vital elements to coordinating inter-governmental and multi-stakeholder initiatives effectively include having a clear and agreed roadmap, close coordination and constant communication, building ownership through engagement of key stakeholders, finding a common ground, adaptability in changing circumstances, balancing virtual efficiency with in-person collaboration, knowledge sharing, and network building. ● As the project approaches its conclusion on December 31, 2024, the remaining activities will focus on the following: 1) Publication/posting of the Project Terminal Evaluation Report; 2) Finalization and publication of Exit and Sustainability Strategy based on RSC guidance; 3) Completion of the Regional Project Manager’s final project report; 4) Completion and submission of documents for UNDP’s internal control audit; 5) Coordination between countries (i.e., PNG) and PEMSEA to initiate the fund transfer to support Regional Secretariat operations in 2025; 6) Publication of the last quarterly e-newsletter; and 7) Continuing the discussion to re-engage Timor-Leste into ATSEA. <p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mr. Eko Rudianto, the Meeting Chair, noted the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The key lessons learned from ATSEA-2 would be useful for the implementation of the long-term regional cooperation. ○ The components of the ATS SAP will directly and indirectly support other programs such as the RPOA-IUU and CTI, hence the need for close collaboration among these initiatives. ○ Knowledge management is a strong point of the project. The knowledge management products should continue to be available online. ○ The SAP and RGM have been adopted with the signing of the Ministerial Declaration, and with the NAPs and NIMCs and Sustainability Plan in place, the future of ATSEA is very promising. ○ Continuing support from the countries and PEMSEA are necessary for ATSEA to continue to flourish, and hopefully UNDP can continue to support the new initiative (i.e., ATSEA-3) ● Mr. Kurniawan of UNDP Indonesia also underscored the significance of the presentations in highlighting the project’s accomplishments and the achievement of key targets. He emphasized that as the project nears its conclusion, meeting the requirements for operational closure is crucial. ● In this regard, Mr. Kurniawan requested the countries to provide clarity on the following key matters: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Unspent budget: Countries need to agree on the utilization of any remaining budget, as unspent funds will be returned to GEF. ○ Disposal or transfer plan for project goods and assets: A clear plan should be established for the appropriate disposition or transfer of project assets ○ Confirmation of project closure: The RSC is requested to formally agree that the project will conclude on December 31, 2024, as per the approved project extension. ● Mr. Kurniawan reiterated the importance of resolving these matters promptly to ensure a smooth and compliant closure process, in line with GEF and UNDP guidelines. ● Mr. Pragyajan of UNDP Timor-Leste informed the meeting that due to ongoing in-country discussions, Timor-Leste’s National Project Board (NPB) Meeting has been rescheduled to December 20, 2024. This meeting is expected to address the project’s remaining deliverables, finalize plans for outstanding activities, and clarify steps for project closure and programming completion. ● Regarding the establishment of the new Marine Protected Area (MPA) in Manatuto to Manufahi and management plan, these matters are currently being deliberated at the |

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| | <p>local level in collaboration with the national government to ensure alignment and effective implementation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On financial delivery, Mr. Pragyajan reported that the Timor-Leste component still has an unspent budget of approximately USD 60,000. The utilization of this balance will be a key agenda item during the NPB meeting, with emphasis on ensuring optimal use of the funds. He also noted that any unspent amounts remaining at the project's conclusion will be returned to the Global Environment Facility (GEF), in line with project guidelines. • Additionally, the management and disposition of project assets will be discussed at the NPB meeting, with the aim of formally transferring these assets to the government to support ongoing and future initiatives related to marine conservation and resource management. • Mr. Kedamwana of PNG confirmed that PNG has USD 37,336 remaining funds, and they are in the process of discussing how NFA can use the available project assets • Indonesia will maximize the remaining balance including conducting a closing ceremony for the ATSEA-2 project with leaders. They are currently listing the assets and will report to the Secretariat and members. • The meeting also acknowledged and agreed with the closing of the project on December 31, 2024. • Indonesia, however, request further guidance from UNDP on the possibility of another project extension, or possibility of procuring office equipment using the remaining project funds as the ATSEA National Focal Point will be transferred to the Directorate General of Marine Spatial Planning and Ocean Management. • Mr. Mahjoub of UNDP-BRH advised that another extension is usually not possible. If it is related to an ongoing activity then it may be possible. Procuring new equipment may also be hard to justify since the project is already closing. • Before the session ended, Ms. Kathrine Aguling, Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist of the ATSEA-2 RPMU took the opportunity to explain one of the findings in the Terminal Evaluation that only 23 out of 36 end of project targets have been achieved. Ms. Aguling clarified that the evaluation was undertaken in September to October while some project activities were still being undertaken. Since then, most of the pending targets have been completed, with only 4 remaining including the formal establishment of the NIMC in Indonesia, vessel registration in Aru, Indonesia, Ministerial Decree for the MPA in Manatuto and Manufahi in Timor-Leste, and METT target for Nino Konis Santana National Park in Timor-Leste, which are still in progress with potential for being completed within the year. • Recognizing the progress, all the countries expressed their agreement on the project achievements • Noting the time, the Chair recommended further discussions, if any, to be undertaken during the agenda item on Next Steps to Transition to Long-term ATSEA Program and RGM. The Chair proceeded to conclude the session with anticipation for ATSEA's transition to a long-term program, guided by the new 10-year SAP. <p>Agreed Follow Up Actions/Recommendations/Decisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Final RSC Meeting noted the country and regional achievements, agreed on the achievement of the project's targets, and approved the remaining activities to be conducted until the end of December 2024. • The meeting also agreed on the closing of the ATSEA-2 Project on December 31, 2024. |
| 3 | Terminal Evaluation |

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| | <p>Presenter: Mr. Iwan Kurniawan, Natural Resources Management Programme Manager, UNDP Indonesia (LINK TO MEETING DOCUMENT); LINK TO PPT)</p> <p>Presentation Overview:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mr. Iwan Kurniawan, Natural Resources Management Programme Manager of UNDP Indonesia, presented the Terminal Evaluation (TE) results and proposed management responses. He underscored that the TE was conducted with the expectation that ATSEA-2 will not just end this year but will be sustained as a long-term Program. ● Mr. Kurniawan elaborated on the purpose and scope of the TE. He also explained the TE consultant team, which consists of an international team leader and two national consultants from Indonesia and Timor-Leste. He reiterated that the TE was conducted through a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. ● The evaluation of the project was based on six key criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, gender equality (GE) and women empowerment, and impact. At the outcome level, the project received a highly satisfactory rating for relevance due to its strong alignment with both regional and national priorities. In terms of effectiveness, it was satisfactory as 23 out of 36 project targets were fully achieved, and there were some delays, primarily due to the impact of COVID-19. Efficiency was rated as satisfactory, with adaptive management practices in place to address challenges. Sustainability was also deemed satisfactory, as institutional mechanisms exist, though some risks remain, particularly with limited post-project commitment and the need to engage the private sector. Environmental sustainability was promising but is susceptible to the effects of climate change. The implication is that continued efforts are needed to mitigate these risks. Women empowerment was rated satisfactory, as over 40% of the participants were women. However, the development of institutional and policy frameworks is necessary to ensure sustained empowerment. Lastly, the impact was satisfactory, with more than 750,000 hectares of landscapes and seascapes now under improved biodiversity management and improved community livelihoods through capacity building activities and sustainable resource use. However, monitoring and scaling up remain essential to fully realize long-term benefits. ● The TE recognized the projects' achievements particularly in strengthening transboundary governance and capacity building, and advancing biodiversity conservation and community livelihoods, while it also noted challenges including the delays in RGM implementation and local government engagement and limited financial sustainability planning for long-term outcomes. ● Mr. Kurniawan proceeded to present the TE recommendations and the proposed management responses/actions and their status, as follows: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) <i>Develop a regional exit strategy for sustaining outcomes</i> – Present the strategy at the Final RSC Meeting (December 10, 2024) and finalize based on RSC inputs. 2) <i>Organize final project review</i> - Conduct the Final RSC Meeting to review project achievements and plan sustainability (scheduled for December 10-11, 2024) 3) <i>Sustain financial commitments</i> - Secure funding commitments from ATS countries (e.g., USD420,000 from Australia, USD65,000 annually from PNG, in-kind support from Indonesia) - Agreements with Australia and PNG have been signed and operational arrangements are ongoing. 4) <i>Improve national government and local collaboration</i> – Operationalize RGM component and coordination in countries (This has been initiated, for further discussion at the Final RSC Meeting). 5) <i>Engage with other implementing agencies and financing opportunities</i> - Pursue Strategic Development Partners, complete ATSEA-3 PIF for GEF 8, and develop |

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| | <p>other potential projects (This has been initiated although further coordination with Timor-Leste is needed to pursue ATSEA-3).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6) <i>Soft mapping of ATS political landscape to facilitate strategic decisions</i> - Build on current database and governance assessment of ATSEA-2, update the political landscape analysis, and establish clear points of contacts (This has been initiated and will build on the RGM). 7) <i>Engage the private sector and mobilize resources through partnerships</i> - Engage private/business sector through the national and regional stakeholder working groups (NSWGs and RSWGs), and Strategic Development Partners (SDPs) – This has been Initiated, for further discussion at Final RSC and First RSWG meetings 8) <i>Strengthen local governance</i> - Build on ATSEA-2 initiatives particularly on capacity building (For inclusion in implementation of new SAP and NAP starting 2025). 9) <i>Integrate gender inclusion (expand gender-focused interventions and monitoring frameworks)</i> - GESI has been highlighted as a cross-cutting issue and action in the new SAP and NAPs, building on the GESI Action Plan from ATSEA-2 (and GESI will be further strengthened as part of SAP and NAPs implementation starting in 2025) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mr. Kurniawan ended his presentation by outlining the next steps, which involve the refinement, submission, and completion of the TE report including the management response by December 19. |
| | <p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Dr. Chek provided no additional comments on the TE presentation. ● Mr. Kedamwana thanked the TE team for their assessment and recommendations, as well as UNDP for facilitating the process. He expressed satisfaction with the significant progress made and the recommendations for improvement, fully supporting them overall. Regarding recommendation No. 2, he suggested convening a strategic meeting in January to discuss SAP implementation in light of Timor-Leste's withdrawal. For recommendation No. 3, he emphasized the need to secure funding to maintain momentum and called on the countries to expedite financial and in-kind commitments to ensure a seamless transition. ● Ms. Hikmayani requested UNDP to facilitate the transitional work from ATSEA-2 to ATSEA-3 by following up on the GEF proposal submission. ● Dr. Sofiane Mahjoub, ATSEA-2 Regional Technical Advisor, UNDP Bangkok Regional Hub, suggested that the management responses be finalized by the following day to allow for their approval by the RSC. He noted that time would be tight if the responses were delayed further, as the project is nearing completion and the holiday season is approaching. ● Mr. Rei representing UNDP Timor-Leste provided no further comments. ● Mr. Kurniawan proposed to finalize the management responses within the day for approval by the RSC, and thanked everyone for the positive feedback. He expressed appreciation for the trust placed in UNDP as a partner in supporting the implementation of ATSEA. He also informed the meeting that in addition to GEF, the Kunming Biodiversity Fund (KBF) is another opportunity to support SAP implementation during the transition phase while waiting for the GEF project. ● Dr. Mahjoub explained further that the KBF is a new fund under the framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in support of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF). It is managed by the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office under the United Nations and is different from the Global Biodiversity Framework Fund (GBFF) under the GEF. The KBF supports countries in delivering biodiversity commitments with funding available from any country. Currently, there is an existing contribution from China. Any country can request funding, and the KBF will prioritize regional projects for Small Island Developing States (SIDS). Since it is not linked to GEF, |

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| | <p>there is no requirement to have all ATS countries sign the SAP. This might be a good opportunity for consideration by the countries. UNDP can support the countries in developing a short proposal by the deadline on 15 January 2025 but will need supporting letters. The funding amount can go up to USD 2.5 million, which is adequate for implementing national activities and some regional activities including the RGM. This can be discussed further in the coming days.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In response to the Chair’s inquiry on the need to have a meeting in the evening to finalize the management responses for the TE, Dr. Susanto highlighted the tight schedule to complete the TE as the report was received just last week. The team has worked collectively to review the report and respond to all the recommendations. The project team has supported UNDP in preparing the management responses which need inputs from the countries during the meeting. He highlighted the need to finalize the management responses for sharing with the countries in the evening, for their approval. <p>Agreed Follow Up Actions/Recommendations/Decisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The RSC meeting agreed to finalize the TE management response during the meeting. |
| 4 | <p>Exit Strategy (Presenter: Ms. Maria Corazon Ebarvia, ATSEA-2 Consultant) (LINK TO MEETING DOCUMENT; LINK TO PPT; LINK TO VIDEO PRESENTATION)</p> <p>Presentation Overview:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Maria Corazon Ebarvia, ATSEA-2 Consultant, delivered a pre-recorded presentation outlining the proposed exit strategy, building on the accomplishments of and foundational initiatives and mechanisms established by the ATSEA-2 Project, to ensure a seamless transition to the RGM and ATS SAP 2024-2033. The Exit or Sustainability Strategy also considered the initial results and recommendations of the Terminal Evaluation. Overall, the objective of the Exit Strategy is to serve as a reference on possible next steps focusing on effective governance, financing, program mechanisms, and sustainability of ATSEA-2’s environmental initiatives. • Ms. Ebarvia highlighted the significance of the ATS SAP 2024-2033 in providing a programmatic framework to continue the ATSEA initiative with sustainable governance and financing structures. • Critical items completed include the RGM, RGM Investment and Financing Strategy, and Preliminary SAP Implementation and Financial Plan. • In line with the regional and national organizational arrangements, the Exit Strategy noted the transition plan earlier developed, outlining key steps for establishing national and regional structures for RGM. The Exit Strategy noted Indonesia’s governmental transition as potential risks to national commitments, necessitating engagement with the incoming administration. • In terms of financing plans, ATSEA-2 has achieved approximately 27-28% of required SAP financing, surpassing the 25% target. This is based on Australia’s support for the initiation of the ALDFG component of the new SAP, PNG’s funding commitment for the Regional Secretariat for 2025 and 2026, PEMSEA’s funding commitment for 2025 and offer to serve as interim fund manager, and Indonesia’s in-kind commitment to host the Regional Secretariat and RGM meetings to be held in Indonesia on 2025 and 2026. • The Exit Strategy flagged Timor-Leste’s delayed endorsement of the SAP which may impact funding timelines, requiring alternative financing solutions if participation remains uncertain. • Ms. Ebarvia also identified other enabling conditions critical to SAP’s success, including retention of staff and key roles, establishment of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) systems, and sustained communications platforms. The initial RSC discussions on |

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| | <p>interim measures, such as PEMSEA’s role as fund manager, and appointing the current Regional Project Manager as interim Executive Directive supported by limited local staff, will support financial operations during the transition phase.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building on the best practices and lessons from ATSEA-2, overall, Ms. Ebarvia highlighted the need for continued interministerial coordination, capacity development, public awareness campaigns, and gender equality initiatives as part of the implementation of the new SAP. She also highlighted the need to scale up key initiatives such as marine pollution control, sustainable fisheries management, and integrated coastal management (ICM) as also incorporated in the SAP 2024-2033. Strengthened partnerships and regional collaboration through the RGM will also help ensure technical and financial support for SAP execution. The continued use of knowledge-sharing platforms and tools will also be an integral part to ensure documentation and dissemination of progress and outcomes. • Ms. Ebarvia recommended the following Exit Strategy (ES) actions to ensure the smooth closure and transition into the successor of ATSEA-2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure unspent ATSEA-2 grant funds from GEF are disbursed before closure to facilitate incomplete national project deliverables. ○ Initiate discussions with Indonesia for a Host Country Agreement to accommodate the Regional Secretariat and second local support staff, a requirement listed in the RGM Investment and Financing Strategy; and confirm support of Indonesia for two RGM meetings that will be held in Indonesia as part of its non-cash contribution to the bridge financing. ○ Turn over activities from the RPMU to the Regional Secretariat, and from the National Coordination Units (NCUs) to the National Secretariats, and develop a workplan and budget for 2025-2026, and corresponding M&E system. ○ Develop a proposed timetable for the review of the requirements for the programme-based and intergovernmental partnership mechanism (e.g., legal personality) and Regional Fund. ○ Confirm PEMSEA will provide the ongoing communications capability for SAP 2024-2033 as there is no funding provision for such a capability within the proposed Regional Secretariat during the bridging phase. ○ Confirm the training workshop for the M&E system as part of turnover to the new Secretariat, and review/refine some indicators as needed. |
| | <p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Chek of Australia sought clarification on whether the Exit Strategy requires formal endorsement by the RSC. In response, Dr. Susanto clarified that endorsement is not mandatory; rather, the Exit Strategy serves as a guiding document for the next steps of the ATSEA program. He further invited countries and RSC members to provide additional comments or suggestions in writing or via email. • Dr. Chek noted that certain elements within the Exit Strategy may need further clarification and committed to sharing his inputs via email following the Final RSC meeting. • The Chair, Mr. Rudianto, emphasized the importance of including fisheries surveillance aspects in the SAP actions. He recommended that these considerations also be integrated into future initiatives and reflected in the Exit Strategy recommendations. • Mr. Kedamwana of Papua New Guinea (PNG) acknowledged the Exit Strategy as a valuable reference for charting a clear path from 2025 to 2033. He reaffirmed PNG's unwavering commitment to the Regional Governance Mechanism (RGM) and its operationalization. • Ms. Hikmayani of Indonesia reiterated Indonesia's strong commitment to ATSEA-2 and the SAP. She noted that Indonesia is completing internal processes to finalize the |

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| | <p>national RGM components and to support the regional secretariat. Additionally, Indonesia pledged its assistance to the Secretariat in exploring alternative funding opportunities, such as the Kunming Biodiversity Fund (KBF). She also encouraged all ATS member countries to actively participate in finalizing proposals for ATSEA-3 under the GEF-8 funding cycle.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Kurniawan reiterated the urgency of the KBF deadline, urging member countries to seize this opportunity to submit proposals that align with the SAP’s biodiversity objectives and targets. He also underscored the need to avoid redundancy with the GEF proposal. • In relation to KBF, Dr. Susanto reminded the RSC that preliminary project concepts were developed during the SAP update process. He identified Component 4 of the SAP—focused on increasing the resilience of regional populations of endangered, threatened, and protected (ETP) species and critical habitats—as the most relevant concept for further expansion in support of a KBF project proposal. • Concluding the discussion, the Chair, Mr. Rudianto, urged each ATS country to coordinate closely with the RPMU and UNDP on the KBF proposal submission before the January 15, 2025 deadline. He further requested that all inputs to the Exit Strategy be submitted by December 16, 2024. <hr/> <p>Agreed Follow Up Actions/Recommendations/Decisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The RSC will submit any further comments and inputs on the draft Exit Strategy to the Regional Project Management Unit (RPMU) by December 16, 2024. • ATS countries and UNDP will coordinate and develop a project concept for submission to the Kunming Biodiversity Fund (KBF) by the deadline of January 15, 2025. |
| 5 | <p>Next Steps to Transition to Long-term ATSEA Program and RGM (Presenter: Dr. Handoko Adi Susanto, Regional Project Manager, ATSEA-2) (LINK TO MEETING DOCUMENT; LINK TO PPT)</p> <p>Presentation Overview:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Susanto delivered the presentation on the proposed next steps for transitioning to the long-term ATSEA Program in line with the RGM transition plan, as well as the process and requirements to formalize the project's closure and hand over the subsequent steps to the Regional Coordinating Committee (RCC) which will convene after the final RSC meeting. • Dr. Susanto underscored the country commitments in the Sydney Ministerial Declaration to formally institutionalize the ATSEA regional governance arrangements through the adoption of the RGM, SAP, financing plans and transition plan, and the mandate to the RCC to initiate and oversee the process. He also highlighted the key aspects that need to transition as presented in the transition plan including the coordination and management mechanism, status or legal personality of the implementing entities, which may have implications on the legal and financial arrangements for operations of the Regional Secretariat in the host country and for the participation of the countries in the RGM, and funding and financial management mechanisms. • There has been significant progress in implementing the RGM transition plan since its endorsement by the 5th RSC Meeting in November 2023. This includes the endorsement also of the 5th RSC of the key governance documents such as the updated ATS SAP, the TOR for the RGM elements, and the RGM Investment and Financing Strategy; the commitments from the countries and PEMSEA in support of the Regional Secretariat during the transition phase; and the designation by the RSC of |

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| | <p>PEMSEA as Interim Fund Manager and the ATSEA-2 Regional Project Manager as Interim Executive Director during the transition phase.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other actions in the transition plan that have been completed in 2024 include the signing of the updated SAP by the Ministers, completion of an indicative 5-year SAP Implementation Plan and SAP Financing Plan, and signing of the Sydney Ministerial Declaration; workshops and consultations to promote mainstreaming of SAP and NAP actions into country programs, delivery of country commitments, and development of supporting projects including the Australia-funded ALDFG project and UNDP-led ATSEA-3 proposal development; and the initiation of RGM establishment from the inaugural meeting of the Council of Ministers during the Ministerial Forum through the nomination and planned confirmation processes for the RCC, Regional Stakeholder Working Group (RSWG), Strategic Development Partners (SDP), and national RGM arrangements. • Further work needs to be done by the RCC to agree on preferred arrangements for operationalizing the RGM considering the RGM Options Paper that was disseminated after the Senior Government Officials’ Meeting (SGOM) in Brisbane, Australia, and to secure Timor-Leste’s participation in the long-term ATSEA program. • Considering the upcoming project closure on December 31, 2024, Dr. Susanto outlined the work to be undertaken within the month in line with GEF and UNDP processes for closing of projects. After the final RSC meeting has reviewed and assured that all project deliverables have been produced including the lessons learned and exit or sustainability plans, the next steps will include the following: a) completion of all outstanding activities including final project report and disbursement of outstanding payments; b) transfer, donation or disposal of project assets (including turn over to the new regional and national secretariats); c) closure of project accounts and preparation and submission of financial reports from the implementing entities to UNDP before the end of December 2024; and d) completion of project closure activities by the UNDP until the first quarter of 2025. • After 2024, all project coordination and management entities will cease to exist, and all unused funds will be returned to UNDP. From 2025 onward, implementation of the SAP and NAPs will be coordinated by the ATSEA RGM with the support of the Interim Fund Manager. To ensure a smooth transition process, Dr. Susanto presented an updated transition plan which outlined key steps before the closing of the ATSEA-2 project to put in place the key RGM structures and systems, and next steps after ATSEA-2 to strengthen and fully operationalize the RGM within available resources. This includes actions in 2025 to confirm the RGM institutional arrangements, develop the governance processes and guidance documents, implement the SAP and NAPs considering available resources, and resource mobilization to generate support for RGM and SAP and NAPs implementation. • Dr. Susanto requested the final RSC meeting to review, provide guidance, and endorse the proposed plan for the closing of the ATSEA-2 Project, and the updated Transition Plan to facilitate the transition from the ATSEA-2 project arrangements to the RGM. |
| | <p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Chek of Australia reminded that from previous discussions on the legal personality, the recommendation was to consider working with a partner organization pending further confirmation of the development of legal personality. Australia does not take a position on legal personality per se for the RCC to consider whether to pursue it or not. Timor-Leste in June requested for options for the RGM arrangements and costs. That needs to come into focus in collaboration with the host country. Dr. Chek also noted that in the Exit strategy, there was also a consideration to move the Regional |

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| | <p>Secretariat out of Bali, which needs further consideration as well. Currently, Bali is an ideal location, being more easily accessible to all or most of the ATS countries (including Timor-Leste). With regard to the operationalization of the RGM, Dr. Chek also cautioned against focusing on building the structure or overbuilding the RGM at the expense of delivering on the ground. He emphasized the need to be vigilant about building the RGM structure, considering what is needed to get things done.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Kedamwana of PNG confirmed PNG’s support for the Secretariat and the RCC in facilitating the necessary steps for the RGM transition. He also expressed their support for Australia’s concern on balancing the establishment of RGM structure and implementation needs going forward. He shared that PNG is in the process of transition and has signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with PEMSEA on the delivery of the financing commitments for the Regional Secretariat. With regard to the operational project closure, it is important for UNDP and PEMSEA to provide guidance and support to the countries to ensure proper closing. On the establishment of the National Secretariat, NFA is in the process of recruiting a National Coordinator, including a role for ATSEA. PNG also confirms the NFA as the focal agency for ATSEA, and Mr. Leban Gisawa (Deputy Managing Director for Corporate Affairs at NFA) as the primary representative for further RCC meetings. PNG has established a National Stakeholder Working Group (NSWG) and identified representatives in the RSWG. Key stakeholders in PNG look forward to continue building on achievements under the project. • Ms. Desri Yanti from the Bureau of Public Relations and International Cooperation of MMAF, Indonesia, sought clarification on the legal personality mentioned in the Exit Strategy and in the Transition Plan. Dr. Susanto clarified that the RGM Options paper has been completed but there is still a need to discuss the preferred option for institutionalizing the RGM. This will be led by the RCC after the closing of ATSEA-2. There is also a need for confirmation from Indonesia on whether the Regional Secretariat will be hosted in Bali or other areas, for example, Jakarta. ATSEA will move forward considering available resources, including the RGM and the development of the agreed structure, moving step by step. • Indonesia requested further clarification on whether a legal personality is needed in order to develop the Headquarters’ Agreement in Indonesia. Dr. Susanto explained that the RGM options paper provided alternatives, including transitioning into an Intergovernmental Organization (IGO) with a legal personality, or into a non-government organization (NGO), or continue the project-based arrangements. • Ms. Aguilin of the RPMU also highlighted the need for guidance from Indonesia on the requirements and processes to ensure stability for the Regional Secretariat office in Indonesia considering the options presented in the RGM Options paper. The RCC will continue the discussion on best options for moving forward building on the foundation provided through the agreed RGM structure. Ms. Sriyanti appreciated the clarification and highlighted the need for a dedicated person to support the process. • Dr. Chek highlighted the need to review the RGM options paper and consider an interim organization to work with while RGM arrangements are being worked out. He also noted that not being a legal personality does not equate to not being a program. • The Chair shared the following information and advice: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Coral Triangle Initiative (CTI) has a legal personality which enabled them to proceed with the Headquarters Agreement. ○ The RPOA-IUU Secretariat, on the other hand does not have a legal personality which limits its flexibility in implementing programs. They basically rely on the partners’ programs. ○ The first step to be resolved is coming up with a strategy to engage Timor-Leste in the first two or three months next year, considering even out-of-the-box |

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| | <p>approaches. They had a similar experience with one country in CTI which was resolved by directly visiting the country.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ There is no need for another Ministerial Declaration to establish a legal personality; it is only needed for the host country in coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs ○ CTI got its legal personality in less than two years, with initially limited funds and personnel, but every country member agreed to provide contributions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Dr. Chek requested the RPMU to recirculate the RGM options paper for review in order to get some country positions to advance the options paper ● Further on the RGM Options paper, Dr. Susanto highlighted the request for inputs from Indonesia on requirements and processes for establishing the legal personality of an IGO in Indonesia, and the steps for establishing a Headquarters Agreement for the Regional Secretariat. ● Ms. Desri Yanti advised that in regard to the Host Country Agreement, the documentation and process will be led by the Legal Bureau of MMAF and will be discussed further. Considering the transition from NFP of ATSEA-2 to the new NFP for ATSEA, she reiterated the need for a dedicated person to support the work. ● Recognizing the need for further consultations on the RGM within the forthcoming RCC, the Chair confirmed the Meeting's agreement on the updated Transition Plan. Dr. Chek of Australia advised that they will be providing written comments. <p><u>Agreed Follow Up Actions/Recommendations/Decisions:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The Final RSC Meeting agreed on the updated transition plan, pending further written comments to be provided by Australia. 2) The RPMU will also recirculate the RGM options paper for reference, and gather country positions from the options in the paper to advance the discussions on the long-term RGM arrangements. |
| | <p><u>Closing Ceremony of the 5th RSC Meeting</u></p> <p>The heads of the delegation from ATS countries, representatives from UNDP BRH, UNDP Country Offices, PEMSEA, ATSEA-2 Project team, Co-chair and Chair concluded the meeting with the following messages:</p> <p>Australia: Underscored that it's not goodbye and it's instead 'Hello, ATSEA'. Congratulated all countries for their work and achievements. Thanked the RPMU, PEMSEA and UNDP for the unwavering support in the last 5 years. Australia looks forward to closer and strengthened collaboration.</p> <p>Indonesia: Expressed gratitude to all National Project Directors and the Regional Project Manager for highlighting the project achievements, and the National Focal Point of Australia for their support and collaboration in implementing the project. Congratulations were extended to everyone for their dedication and hard work that led to commendable outcomes.</p> <p>Emphasized Indonesia's commitment to fostering further collaboration, with the hope that it will continue to grow for the sustainability of shared resources and the well-being of all people in the region.</p> <p>Conveyed Indonesia's deepest appreciation to UNDP and PEMSEA for their invaluable support which have been instrumental in the successful implementation of the project.</p> |

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| | <p>Papua New Guinea (PNG): Expressed sincere gratitude to all those involved in the ATSEA initiative as it approaches a successful conclusion. On behalf of the National Fisheries Authority of PNG, the project team, and stakeholders in PNG, appreciation was extended to the regional team and PEMSEA, national project teams, UNDP BRH, UNDP country offices, and the Governments of Australia, Indonesia, PNG, and Timor-Leste for their support.</p> <p>Acknowledged the project as a significant opportunity for capacity building, knowledge exchange, and strengthening regional ties. Emphasized that the progress made in fostering collaboration and promoting sustainable management of the Arafura and Timor Seas reflects collective efforts.</p> <p>Reaffirmed confidence that the project outcomes will guide future efforts in marine and coastal resource management, and highlighted that while this phase officially concludes, the momentum and collaboration for a sustainable future must continue under the longer-term ATSEA program.</p> <p>Concluded with gratitude for all contributions and a commitment to advancing the good work that has been started.</p> <p>UNDP Indonesia: Thanked esteemed partners and colleagues, expressing high appreciation for the collaboration and insightful contributions from the participating countries and partners as the final regional Steering Committee meeting concludes. Highlighted that their unwavering support has been a cornerstone of ATSEA-2's success, transforming it into a platform for sustainable regional governance. Reiterated UNDP's commitment to supporting the ATS region, offering unconditional assistance and posing the simple question, "How can we help?" Emphasized that UNDP's role across the globe is to act as a trusted and integral partner in ecosystems, contributing humbly and meaningfully rather than leading. Expressed pride in being part of this collective journey and gratitude for the trust placed in UNDP. Called on all participants to carry forward the spirit of collaboration and resilience as the program enters its next chapter, ensuring the shared vision becomes a lasting reality. Extended thanks to Australia, Indonesia, PNG, Timor-Leste, PEMSEA, RPMU, and NCU teams while wishing continued success in future efforts.</p> <p>UNDP Timor-Leste: Extended gratitude for the support received from the governments involved and emphasized the shared vision for the region that has guided the project's efforts. On behalf of UNDP Timor-Leste, expressed appreciation for the project's progress and achievements and confirmed UNDP's willingness to work together moving forward. Recognized the transition from a project to a program as a significant milestone for the region, reflecting the collective dedication to protecting the Arafura and Timor Seas. Acknowledged the helpfulness of joint efforts in working toward the shared vision established at the start of the initiative. Sincerely appreciated the support provided and reiterated a commitment to continue contributing under the guidance of regional partners, fostering further collaboration and progress. Reassured that UNDP Timor-Leste will endeavor to deliver the remaining targets by the end of the month in collaboration with the government.</p> <p>UNDP BRH: Expressed gratitude for the invaluable dedication, support, and collaboration demonstrated by all the countries, partners, and the whole project team over the years. Acknowledged joining the project after the midterm evaluation, following the retirement</p> |

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| | <p>of his predecessor, and highlighted being consistently impressed by the spirit, commitment, and professionalism of both the project team and the government partners. Shared a personal note, describing the ATSEA-2 initiative as one of his favorite projects in his portfolio. Thanked all involved for their dedication, which has significantly contributed to the project's success. Emphasized the achievements showcased at the GEF International Waters Conference a few months ago, including the creation of a regional governance mechanism. Concluded with a reassurance of UNDP's support, and anticipation of continuing discussions on how to keep moving forward and securing more resources for sustaining the program.</p> <p>PEMSEA: Expressed gratitude and pride for the opportunity to collaborate on the project, reflecting on initial skepticism about PEMSEA managing a program in the Arafura and Timor Seas. Six years later, with an approved Strategic Action Programme (SAP) and regional governance mechanism embedded in a ministerial declaration, these milestones mark significant achievements, even as work continues. Optimistically noted the potential for Timor-Leste to rejoin the program in the future, emphasizing the importance of seizing the right opportunities.</p> <p>Acknowledged key factors contributing to the project's success, including the collective commitment, hard work, and dedication of all participants. Highlighted the consistency of agencies' and units' representation from each country throughout the project, ensuring continuity in discussions and activities. Recognized the strategic alliance between PEMSEA, UNDP, and GEF, which has spanned over 30 years, as well as the strong regional project management team based in Bali.</p> <p>Concluded by expressing gratitude for the trust and support received, describing the collaboration as both a pleasure and a privilege. Hoped for positive endorsement as ATSEA Strategic Development Partner during the first RCC meeting and looked forward to continuing the journey toward shared goals.</p> <p>Chair: Acknowledged the remarkable journey of the project for more than five years and extended gratitude to the participating countries and project team for their dedication and efforts. Acknowledged the challenges and expressed optimism for Timor-Leste's participation in the program at the soonest time possible. Congratulated the signing of the ministerial declaration, which secured the SAP and the RGM and establishes a foundation for long-term collaboration over the next decade. Highlighted the importance of the transition plan, ensuring readiness to move forward from the ATSEA project to a program. Expressed confidence that the foundation established will continue to support the collective aspirations for a sustainable and thriving Arafura and Timor Seas region.</p> |

Prepared and signed via Docusign by the representatives of the ATSEA-2 Project Regional Steering Committee.

(SENIOR BENEFICIARIES/RSC MEMBERS)

(IMPLEMENTING AND EXECUTING AGENCIES)

Dr. Andrew Chek
Assistant Director, Pacific and Regional Section,
Department of Climate Change, Energy, the
Environment and Water (DCCEEW)
Australia

Dr. Aretha Aprilia
Head of Environment Unit, UNDP Indonesia

Ms. Yayan Hikmayani
National Project Director, Indonesia

Ms. Adeline Carrier
Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP Timor-
Leste

Mr. Leban Gisawa
National Project Director, Papua New Guinea


Ms. Aimee T. Gonzales
Executive Director, PEMSEA Resource Facility

Annex 1. List of Participants

| No. | Name | Position | Institution |
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| | AUSTRALIA | | |
| 1 | Dr. Andrew Chek | Pacific and Regional Section, International Environment, Reef, and Oceans Division | Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) |
| | INDONESIA | | |
| 2 | Ms. Yayan Hikmayani | Head of Fisheries Extension Centre, BPPSDMKP, ATSEA-2 National Project Director | Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries (MMAF) |
| 3 | Mr. Matheus Eko Rudianto | Principal Fisheries Inspector | DG Surveillance MMAF |
| 4 | Ms. Desri Yanti | Bureau of Public Relations and International Cooperation | Secretariat General of MMAF |
| 5 | Mr. Noor E. Syahlani | Directorate General of Asia-Pacific and Africa | Ministry of Foreign Affairs |
| 6 | Ms. Iyus Sari | Directorate General of Marine Spatial Management | MMAF |
| 7 | Mr. Ardiyansyah Hasyim | Senior Policy Analyst | MMAF |
| 8 | Ms. Niken Winarsih | Sub-coordinator of Marine Fisheries Research/Cooperation, Fisheries Research Centre | BPPSDMKP of MMAF |
| 9 | Ms. Ni Nyoman Siti Mardiani Satria | Head of Tuna Research Center | BPPSDMKP of MMAF |
| 10 | Ms. Mega Nanda | Executive Secretary | MMAF |
| 11 | Mr. Ahmed Sofiulah | Marine and coastal ecosystem manager | MMAF |
| 12 | Ms. Vidlia Putri R | Marine and coastal ecosystem manager | MMAF |
| 13 | Ms. Aisyah Fama | Analyst | MMAF |
| 14 | Ms. Anita Setyaningsih | | Setditjen PKRL, MMAF |
| 15 | Mr. Afriza Aziz | PR, BPPSDM-KKP | MMAF |
| 16 | Ms. Kiestiko Sari S | KS, BPPSDM-KKP | MMAF |
| 17 | Mr. Wahyu Wibowo | PR | MMAF |
| | PAPUA NEW GUINEA | | |
| 18 | Mr. Terence Kedamwana | Manager-Coastal Fisheries, ATSEA-2 PNG OFP | National Fishery Authority (NFA) |
| 19 | Mr. Vagi Leke Rei | Manager – Marine Ecosystems, National Advisor – ATSEA-2 | Conservation and Environmental Protection Authority (CEPA) |
| | NON-COUNTRY | | |
| 20 | Mr. Iwan Kurniawan | NRM Project Manager | UNDP Indonesia |
| 21 | Mr. M. Yayat Afianto | Monitoring, Reporting and Technical Officer | EU, UNDP Indonesia |
| 22 | Ms. Nathazha Bostanova Eunike Sipasulta | ATSEA-2 NCU Indonesia | UNDP Indonesia |
| 23 | Ms. Lestari Handayani | ATSEA-2 NCU Indonesia | UNDP Indonesia |

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|----|--|--|---|
| 24 | Mr. Safran Yusri | ATSEA-2 NCU Indonesia | UNDP Indonesia |
| 25 | Ms. Nabila Jihan Tazkia | ATSEA-2 NCU Indonesia | UNDP Indonesia |
| 26 | Ms. Safina Putri Afrilia | ATSEA-2 NCU Indonesia | UNDP Indonesia |
| 27 | Ms. Rembulan Cahyaning Astarti Wijanarko | ATSEA-2 NCU Indonesia | UNDP Indonesia |
| 28 | Mr. Fakhurrozi | ATSEA-2 NCU Indonesia | UNDP Indonesia |
| 29 | Mr. Pragyajan Yalamber Rai | Portfolio Analyst / Head of Environment Unit (Interim) | UNDP Timor-Leste |
| 30 | Mr. Kenneth Yhuanje | National Project Coordinator | ATSEA-2 NCU PNG |
| 31 | Mr. Joseph Kiningi | Admin/Finance Officer | ATSEA-2 NCU PNG |
| 32 | Dr. Sofiane Mahjoub | Regional Technical Advisor | UNDP Bangkok Regional Hub |
| 33 | Ms. Aimee Gonzales | Executive Director | PEMSEA Resource Facility |
| 34 | Dr. Handoko Adi Susanto | Regional Project Manager | ATSEA-2 Regional Project Management Unit (RPMU) |
| 35 | Ms. Casandra Tania | Regional Biodiversity Specialist | RPMU |
| 36 | Ms. Cristine Ingrid S. Narcise | Policy/Results-Based Management Specialist | RPMU |
| 37 | Ms. Kathrine Rose G. Aguilin | M&E Specialist | RPMU |
| 38 | Ms. Stella Yovita Puteri | Communication and KM Specialist | RPMU |
| 39 | Ms. Ni Luh Putu Yulia Dewi | Communication Assistant | RPMU |
| 40 | Mr. Nur Junaidi | Admin and Finance Associate | RPMU |
| 41 | Ms. Chyntia Rachmadanti | Project Assistant | RPMU |



 3rd Floor Annex Building of Tuna Research Center, MMAF
Jl. Mertasari No. 140, Sidakarya,
Denpasar 80224 Bali, Indonesia

P: +62 361 4484 147
E: infoatsea2@pemsea.org
W: atsea-program.com

 [program_atsea](https://www.instagram.com/program_atsea)
 [ProgramAtsea](https://twitter.com/ProgramAtsea)
 [ATSEA Program](https://www.linkedin.com/company/atsea-program)

 [Program ATSEA](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...)
 [ProgramATSEA](https://www.facebook.com/ProgramATSEA)