



STRATEGIC ACTION PROGRAMME FOR THE ARAFURA AND TIMOR SEAS REGION 2024-2033

Supporting the regional blue economy through coordinated transboundary action



STRATEGIC ACTION PROGRAMME (SAP) FOR THE ARAFURA AND TIMOR SEAS REGION (ATS) 2024-2033

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Suggested Citation:

ATSEA (2023). Strategic Action Programme (SAP) for the Arafura and Timor Seas Region (ATS), 2024-2033. Arafura and Timor Seas Ecosystem Action Phase II (ATSEA-2) Project, Bali, Indonesia. 78pp.

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Cover Image: Coastal View from Rote Ndao, Indonesia featuring calm water bordered by a lush green hedge with purple flowers.

Printed in Denpasar, Bali, Indonesia

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REGIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE ENDORSEMENT OF THE STRATEGIC ACTION PROGRAMME 2024-2033

The Arafura and Timor Seas Strategic Action Programme (SAP) for the period 2024-2033 builds upon a meticulous review process aimed at ensuring the utmost alignment with individual country and regional priorities.

The four Arafura and Timor Seas (ATS) countries – Australia, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, and Timor-Leste – formally endorsed the SAP 2024-2033 during the 5th Regional Steering Committee (RSC) Meeting on 22 November 2023 in Jakarta, Indonesia, through their duly appointed National Project Director (NPD) or National Focal Point (NFP).

Transboundary management requires collective action, which can only be achieved through genuine collaboration. This endorsement signifies the collective commitment to guide the forthcoming ten-year regional collaboration toward our mutual vision of a sustainable Arafura and Timor Seas region.

The RSC-level endorsement serves as a precursor to the formal agreement by the four ATS countries through the signature of the respective Ministers from the ATSEA focal ministries.



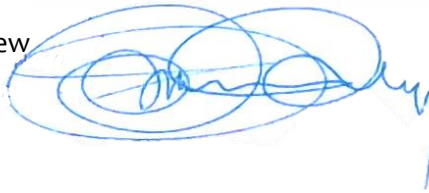

Country	Designated NPDs/NFP	Agency
Australia	Dr. Andrew Chek	Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water
Indonesia	Ms. Yayan Hikmayani	Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries
Papua New Guinea	Mr. Leban Gisawa	National Fisheries Authority
Timor-Leste	Mr. Celestino Da Cunha Barreto	Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Forestry

MINISTERIAL ADOPTION OF THE STRATEGIC ACTION PROGRAMME 2024-2033

We, the Ministers of the ATSEA focal Ministries, recognize the following:

- The Strategic Action Programme (SAP) for the Arafura and Timor Seas Region 2024-2033 builds upon the foundation laid by the inaugural SAP for 2014-2023, supported by the first Arafura and Timor Seas Ministerial Declaration.
- The unwavering commitment of Arafura and Timor Seas countries to ensure the sustainable protection and development of the Arafura and Timor Seas guides the SAP 2024-2033.
- The imperative to effectively address transboundary issues delineated in the updated Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) is central to the SAP 2024-2033.

We, the Ministers of the ATSEA focal Ministries are pleased to adopt the ATSEA Strategic Action Programme for the Arafura and Timor Seas Region 2024-2033 as a continuation of our collective efforts. With this adoption, we pledge our unwavering dedication to the principles and objectives encapsulated within it, heralding a new chapter in our cooperative efforts towards the sustainable stewardship of the Arafura and Timor Seas.

Country	Signature	Minister
Australia		The Hon Tanya Plibersek, MP, Minister for the Environment and Water
Indonesia		The Hon Sakti Wahyu Trenggono Minister of Marine Affairs and Fisheries
Papua New Guinea	 	The Hon Jelta Wong, MP, Minister for Fisheries and Marine Resources
Timor-Leste		The Hon Marcos da Cruz Minister of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Forestry

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Strategic Action Programme (ATS-SAP 2024-2033) sets out the strategic direction and priority actions that will be required over the next decade to address four priority transboundary concerns identified for the 167-million-hectare Arafura and Timor Seas Large Marine Ecosystem region (ATS). The SAP is focused on four strategic issues: marine plastic pollution, oil spills, small-scale Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, and declines of populations of endangered, threatened and protected (ETP) species—all as they pertain to transboundary areas. More broadly, as a framework for collaborative regional action, the SAP supports the four littoral countries to meet a range of environmental and sustainable development goals and obligations at international, regional, national and sub-national levels.

The Arafura and Timor Seas are globally important, linking Indian and Pacific Oceans and influencing global ocean circulation and climate. The region is rich in living and non-living marine resources including capture fisheries, gas and oil reserves, storage and sequestration of carbon, cultural and traditional goods and services and conditions supporting valuable mariculture and tourism industries. The region is also a stronghold for globally significant biodiversity values which may be distributed across jurisdictional boundaries due to the high degree of connectivity of ecosystems, habitats and species in the region. However, these ecosystem services are threatened by increasing pressures from various anthropogenic factors including climate change.

ATS-SAP Component 1 is focused on reducing the impacts of plastic marine debris in the ATS marine environment. ATSEA has identified shoreline debris hotspots, including Rote Ndao and Timor-Leste's south coast, while the ATS has been identified as a global hotspot for abandoned, lost, or otherwise discarded fishing gears (ALDFG). Drivers include the 'direct action' of purposeful or accidental discarding of fishing nets and other gears at sea, the dispersal of solid or plastic wastes from port facilities, coastal communities or land-based refuse dumps, and coastal watersheds. These issues may be exacerbated at times by a lack of adequate coastal sanitation infrastructure or waste disposal facilities in ports and coastal settlements. This SAP focuses on reducing plastic pollution of the marine environment from land-based sources (Operational Objective 1.1), and from Abandoned, Lost and Discarded Fishing Gears, or 'ALDFG' (Operational Objective 1.2), while also contributing to reductions in the production, use and disposal of harmful plastic wastes by stimulating the 'circular economy' concepts in the region (Operational Objective 1.3).

ATS-SAP Component 2 is concerned with strengthening regional capacity to avoid and respond to oil spills. The Arafura and Timor Seas are rich in gas and oil reserves, which have the potential to provide high value to the communities of the ATS. However, the sector carries intrinsic risks; the accidental discharge or loss of crude oil from offshore platforms and wells, tankers and pipelines may result in environmental impacts which can have significant flow-on economic and social impacts. These risks will be addressed by enhancing regional coordination and developing regional-level capacity to reduce the incidence of oil spills, and in the case of a spill, minimising impacts by facilitating coordinated regional responses, capacities and resources.

ATS-SAP Component 3 is focused on improving the management of those small-scale capture fisheries and related post-harvest activities that may be operating illegally in ATS transboundary areas. In some cases, small-scale fishers may be practicing their fishing operations according to long-standing cultural identities or customary practices that may span national jurisdictions. Their activities may be influenced by trans-boundary market forces and supply chains, especially where formal markets are under-developed in remote areas. These fisheries may operate in ambiguous legal contexts, such as disputed territories or in fishing grounds which straddle jurisdictional boundaries, and in some cases, small-scale fishers may be unaware that their activities are illegal. This component is intended to complement the ongoing work of the existing RPOA-IUU regional coordination mechanism, which primarily combats IUU fishing undertaken by larger commercial and industrial fleets, illegal foreign fleets and organised crime syndicates.

ATS-SAP Component 4 is concerned with stabilizing, and where possible recovering certain populations of Endangered, Threatened and Protected (ETP) species known to utilise marine and coastal habitats across the ATS region. The ATS region hosts numerous ETP species with shared transboundary populations, including dugongs; six species of sea turtles, (such as green turtle, hawksbill, loggerhead, leatherback, olive ridley and flatback turtle); and several sharks and ray species (such as largetooth sawfish, green sawfish and the whale shark). ETP species may include species on international listings, such as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), the Convention of Migratory Species (CMS), and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species, or may be listed via national or sub-national legislative instruments and protected species lists. This component also incorporates ‘area-based measures’ (including MPAs and other effective area-based conservation measures, or ‘OECMs’) intended to safeguard critical habitats of those species while also safeguarding ecosystem functions that benefit people.

In addition to the four thematic components, this SAP also incorporates cross-cutting concerns of climate change and Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI). It also outlines key governance objectives and priority actions required to successfully implement the SAP, and to achieve sustainable management of the ATS more broadly.

SAP COMPONENT 1: Reducing marine and coastal plastic pollution including ALDFG	SAP COMPONENT 2: Preventing and responding to oil spills	SAP COMPONENT 3: Reducing incidence of small-scale IUU fishing in transboundary areas	SAP COMPONENT 4: Increase resilience of regional populations of endangered, threatened and protected (ETP) species and critical habitats
COMPONENT GOAL: Reduction of the levels of marine and coastal plastic pollution, including ALDFG, in the ATS	COMPONENT GOAL: Ecosystem impacts from oil spills prevented or reduced through enhanced regional coordination and best practices	COMPONENT GOAL: Reduce small-scale illegal fishing through improved management arrangements in transboundary areas in support of RPOA/NPOA-IUUF	COMPONENT GOAL: Important regional populations of priority ETP species and their critical habitats are stabilised
OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 1.1: Reduce inputs of plastic pollutants from land-based sources	OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 2.1: Strengthen regional coordination and capacities on oil spill preparedness and response	OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 3.1: Create effective agreements and incentives to improve management of small-scale fisheries operating illegally in transboundary areas	OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 4.1: Enhance collaborative management of priority transboundary or migratory populations of ETP species
OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 1.2: Reduce inputs of Abandoned, Lost and otherwise Discarded Fishing Gear (ALDFG)			OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 4.2: Build resilience of ATS critical habitats and ecosystems against climate change through effective area-based management
Cross-cutting Objective 1: Mainstreaming Climate Change			
Objective: Effective mainstreaming of climate change response in SAP governance and implementation			
Cross-cutting Objective 2: Gender equity and social inclusion			
Objective: Effective mainstreaming of GESI in SAP governance and implementation			
SAP Governance Objectives			
Objective 1: Effective and efficient regional coordination to support SAP implementation			
Objective 2: Effective resource mobilisation to support SAP implementation			

This new SAP is the second iteration for the ATS region; this revision was prepared under the auspices of ATSEA-2 in collaboration with regional and national Working Groups (RWG, NGW), ATSEA-2 National Focal Points, UNDP and National Coordination Units (NCUs) and the RPMU.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ALDFG	Abandoned, Lost and otherwise Discarded Fishing Gear
APEC	Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ATS	Arafura and Timor Seas
ATSEA	Arafura and Timor Seas Ecosystem Action
ATSEF	Arafura and Timor Seas Expert Forum
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species
CMS	Convention on Migratory Species
CPUE	Catch Per Unit Effort
CTI-CFF	Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs, Fisheries and Food Security
EAFM	Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management
EbA	Ecosystem-based Adaptation
ENSO	El Nino-Southern Oscillation
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations
GEF	Global Environment Facility
ICZM	Integrated Coastal Zone Management
IUU	Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported
LME	Large Marine Ecosystem
MARPOL	International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships
MCS	Monitoring, Control and Surveillance
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MPA	Marine Protected Area
MPP	Marine Plastic Pollution
MSP	Marine Spatial Planning
NAP	National Action Programme
NAPA	National Adaptation Programme of Action
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NPOA	National Plan of Action
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NPOA-IUU	National Programme of Action to combat IUU fishing
PEMSEA	Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia
PES	Payment for Environmental Services
POPs/NIPs	Persistent Organic Pollutants/National Implementation Plans
REDD	Reduction of Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
RBM	Rights-based (Fisheries) Management
RPOA-IUU	Regional Plan of Action to Promote Responsible Fishing Practices including Combating IUU Fishing in the Region
SAP	Strategic Action Programme
SEG	Stakeholder Engagement Group
SSF	Small-scale Fisheries
TDA	Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION



1.1. Strategic Action Programme (SAP) Purpose and Vision

The Strategic Action Programme (SAP) is a negotiated document intended to provide a programmatic approach to guide long-term collaborative action in response to the transboundary issues identified and prioritised in the Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) 2023. The SAP's primary purpose is to provide a clear and agreed framework from which the four ATS littoral countries may collaborate on the management of the ATS large marine ecosystem, in support of the sustainable development of the region.

This updated document is the second iteration of the SAP for the ATS region, replacing the first iteration, developed in 2012. It outlines the agreed vision, goals, objectives and targets, as well as the specific actions, timelines and modes of implementation and governance measures required to achieve them, and the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) approach that will help to measure the programme's performance and impacts.

LONG-TERM VISION: A healthy, resilient and productive ATS that supports human wellbeing and nature

The shared long-term vision encapsulates the shared values of the four ATS littoral countries; human wellbeing, ecological health, resilience to climate change, and a productive 'blue economy' that drives economic growth while supporting the enabling environment needed to sustain it for the benefit of future generations.

With a long-term horizon of twenty years, the SAP vision can help to sustain efforts in the future by providing continuity and providing opportunities for SAP revision and ongoing collaboration beyond its 10-year plan term.

ATSEA'S STATED MISSION IN THE ATS: To foster social, ecological and economic progress through a blue economy oriented regional partnership in the ATS region

As an overarching regional framework for adaptive management of the ATS large marine ecosystem, the SAP outlines regional-level collaborative action, and serves to guide ATS countries in the development of counterpart National Action Programmes (NAPs) and highlight key linkages between regional and national level interventions. The SAP supports countries to meet existing obligations including the internationally-agreed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and a range of regional and national priorities related to the economy, human development and the sustainable management of valuable marine and coastal resources – all essential to a sustainable and productive regional blue economy.

1.2. The Arafura and Timor Seas Large Marine Ecosystem

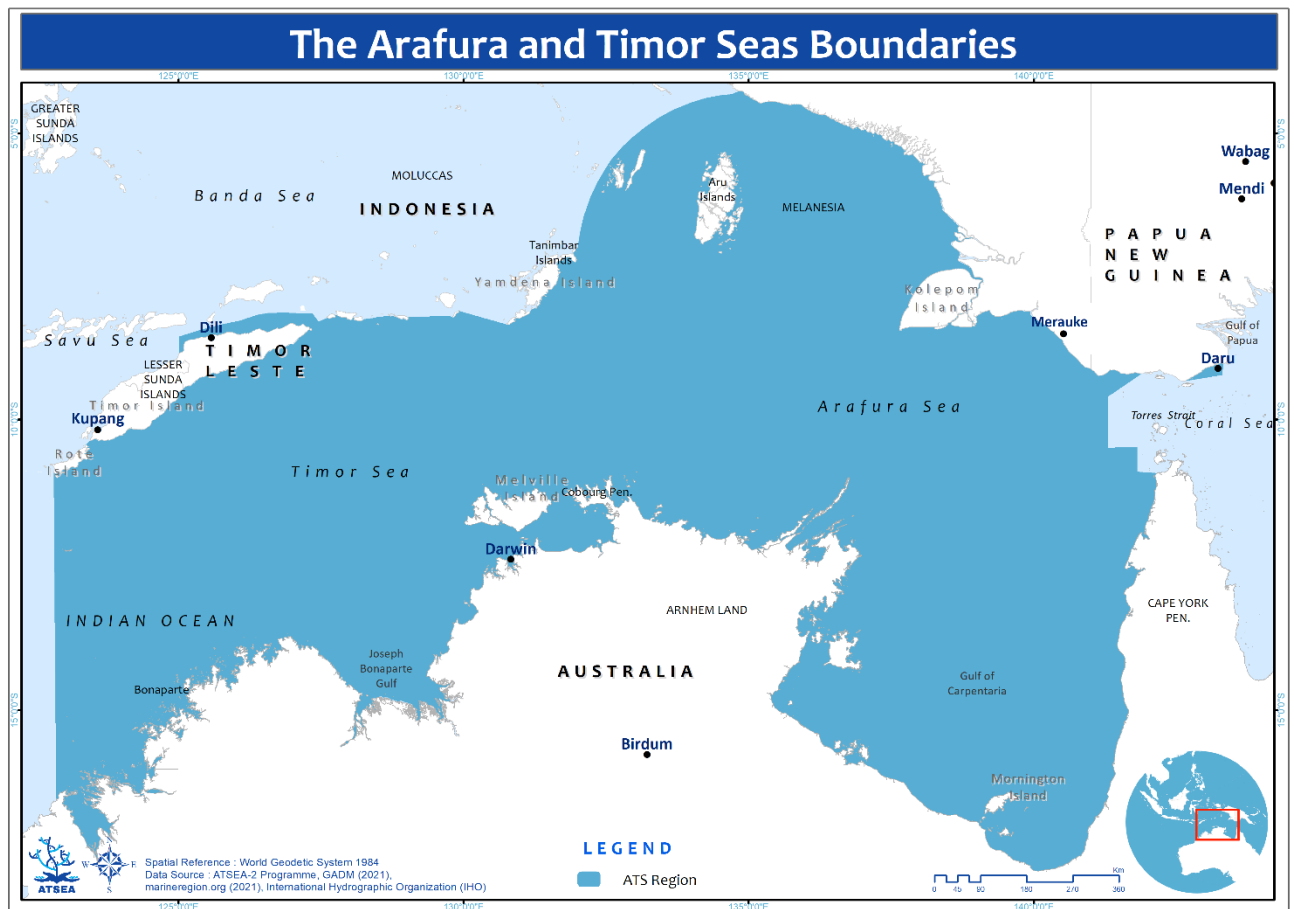


Figure 1 – ATS Large Marine Ecosystem (LME) boundaries

The Arafura and Timor Seas are globally important, linking the Indian and Pacific Oceans and playing an important role in global ocean circulation. The marine and coastal ecosystems of the 167-million-hectare region are extremely rich in living and non-living marine resources – all told, they provide ecosystem services to the four littoral nations of the ATS with a combined annual value estimated at US\$7.3 billion. These values include the provision of fisheries, gas and oil reserves, storage and sequestration of carbon in ‘blue carbon’ coastal ecosystems, cultural and traditional goods and services, the spaces and environmental conditions needed to support valuable mariculture industries, and the special places and attractions that support marine and coastal tourism industries.

The Arafura and Timor Seas region is also a stronghold for globally significant biodiversity values. In many cases, these values exist within national jurisdictions (i.e., territorial waters), while in other cases may be distributed across boundaries. However, the ATS’s biodiversity and the ecosystem services derived from it are under threat due to increasing pressure from various anthropogenic factors, including the impacts of climate change.

1.3. ATSEA: Building on Success

This SAP was developed under the auspices of ATSEA-2 - the 2nd phase of the GEF-financed, UNDP-supported ATSEA program. It was designed to enhance regional collaboration and coordination in the Arafura and Timor Seas (ATS) region, which is composed of part of the marine domains of Australia, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, and Timor-Leste. Since 2003, representatives from governmental and non-governmental stakeholders working on sustainable marine development issues in the four ATS countries have come together to promote integrated and ecosystem-based management of the ATS. Beginning with the Arafura and Timor Seas Experts Forum (ATSEF), the collaboration has progressed through project-based initiatives under two GEF-supported and UNDP-implemented ATSEA projects (ATSEA-1 2009-2014, and ATSEA-2 2019-2024).

The inaugural ten-year SAP was launched in 2014 and addressed five key issues; unsustainable fisheries, degradation of coastal and marine habitats, marine and land-based pollution, decline of threatened and migratory species, and the impacts of climate change.

This updated SAP for the period 2024-2033 builds on that first SAP (Box 1); it has been created with the benefit of a decade of shared experience in delivering an ambitious, regional scope of work. It also draws on a wealth of new information that was not available a decade ago – much of which was generated through implementation of the research agenda encapsulated in the 2012 SAP, including a series of recent thematic technical and governance assessments undertaken by the ATSEA-2 program between 2019-2022.

Primarily, this updated SAP responds to the findings of the second Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) developed for the ATS. The updated TDA was delivered by ATSEA-2 in early 2023, in order to review the status and trends of important coastal and marine resources, identify priority transboundary environmental issues in the ATS region, and understand the key drivers and impacts of these problems, and opportunities for collaboration, in order to support the formulation of new SAP strategies that can best address them.

This new strategic direction for ATS also builds on significant advances in regional governance; since the first SAP was developed a decade ago, a Regional Governance Mechanism (RGM) has been designed based on stakeholder inputs. Under the guidance of the Council of Ministers and in accordance with the direction provided by a Regional Coordination Committee (RCC) and supported by a Regional Secretariat, a Regional Stakeholder Working Group (RSWG) will be created to deliver regional elements of this SAP, supported by National Stakeholder Working Groups (NSWGs). And at the country level, National Coordination Committees will coordinate and oversee delivery of national priority actions by relevant agencies, and in some cases National Stakeholder Working Groups. Implementation of the 2024-2033 SAP will provide strong impetus for the consolidation and refinement of the RGM, essential for addressing transboundary issues over the long term.

Box 1: ATSEA SAP 2012-2023 Key achievements

Based on the implementation of the first iteration of the SAP, strong progress has been made across the region on many issues. These successes provide a strong basis from which the ATS community can address the priority issues outlined in this revised SAP.

- In support of sustainable fisheries management, **Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM)** and **Fisheries Improvement Projects (FIPs)** adopted across major fisheries; technical assessments and strong regional and bilateral cooperation to tackle **IUU fishing**.
- Coverage of **Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)** expanded with the creation of new and more effective MPAs and through support to strengthening of existing priority MPAs, particularly in Indonesia and Timor-Leste.
- The endorsement of a **Regional Action Plan (RAP) for the Protection of Sea Turtles** that complements existing national plans of action.
- Assessments on **land-based and marine-based pollution**, and new collaborations with industry on **regional oil spill preparedness and response**.
- Stronger **engagement of women in integrated coastal management (ICM) and ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA)**, and the adoption of **ICM plans incorporating climate change adaptation**.
- The endorsement of the **Guide for Facilitators and Decisionmakers: Incorporating Climate Change Results into National and Local Planning** as a tool for local managers and communities to understand climate vulnerability, identify effective adaptation measures, and develop local adaptation plans.

1.4. A Sustainable ATS Blue Economy: The rationale for coordinated transboundary action

With its 5,000km of coastline divided among the four littoral countries of Australia, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and Timor-Leste, the Arafura and Timor Seas region is defined as a ‘semi-enclosed sea’. Article 123 of the UN Convention on the Law of the SEA (UNCLOS) places a responsibility and obligation on countries bordering enclosed and semi-enclosed seas to cooperate in resource management, protection of marine environments and scientific research.

Beyond legal definitions, there are ecological, cultural and pragmatic reasons for transboundary collaboration on the region’s management. For millennia, ATS’s littoral communities have used and shared natural resources and developed local customs and approaches for their management. The seas have shaped human development in the four countries and contributed to the region’s rich and unique cultures. Many of the region’s cultures and traditions exist beyond jurisdictional boundaries. The ATS Large Marine Ecosystem is at the heart of the regional *sustainable blue economy*; defined by UNDP as “the sustainable use of ocean resources for

economic growth, jobs and social and financial inclusion, with a focus on preservation and restoration of the health of ocean ecosystems and the services they provide”.

As the core of ATSEA’s regional program of collaborative action, the SAP can uniquely strengthen management of the ATS Large Marine Ecosystem in the following ways:

- Provide structure and clarity around regional collaboration and coordination
- Inform the development of strategic relationships
- Promote adoption of scalable best practices
- Bring together global and regional targets in a consolidated approach
- Support and prioritise enhanced regional monitoring and information sharing
- Engender recognition and support for ATS

More broadly, the SAP embodies a collective commitment to a sustainable blue economy, to ecosystem-based management, to the rule of law, and to advancing the rights and opportunities of the region’s many and diverse communities and economic sectors.

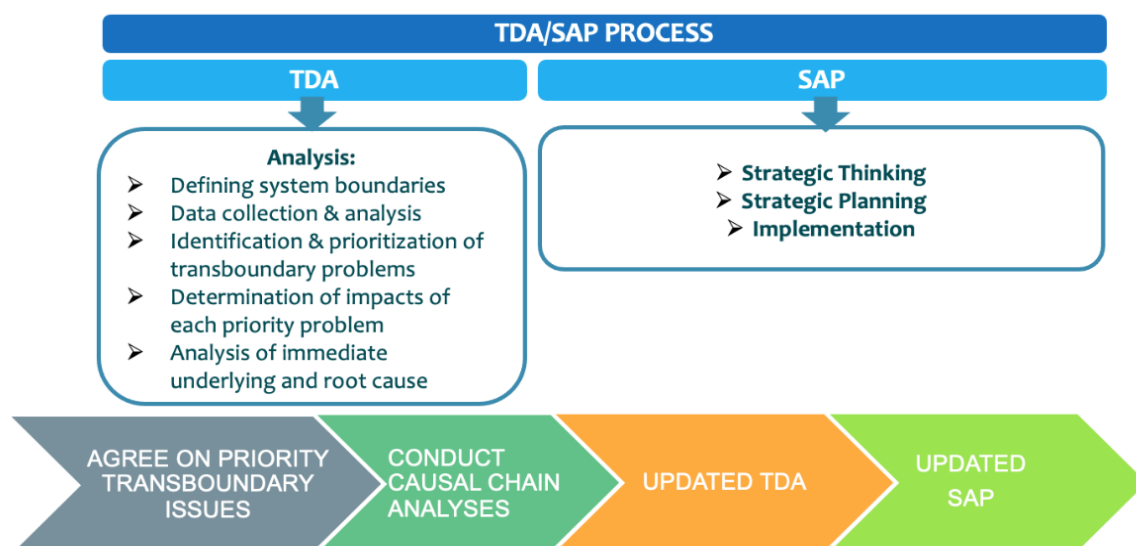
The SAP supports existing national-level blue economy initiatives including the following:

- Australia's Oceans Policy
- Indonesia’s Blue Economy Roadmap (2023-2045)
- Indonesian Ocean Policy
- Timor-Leste’s Financing the Blue Economy Roadmap
- Timor-Leste National Oceans Policy
- Papua New Guinea National Oceans Policy (2020-2030)

Implementing the SAP will also strengthen ATS countries’ contributions to important global sustainability agreements, including the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

1.5. The SAP Updating Process

As shown in Figure 2, the updating of the SAP for the ATS region is based on the established GEF/International Waters process and closely followed the revision of the Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA), conducted for the ATS in 2022-2023. The TDA process is used to identify and quantify the priority transboundary issues and establish the causes of those issues. The SAP is then developed (in this case updated) as a regional response to the issues prioritised by the regional community.



Adapted from the Global Environment Facility/International Waters

Figure 2 – Schematic of TDA/SAP creation process

Box 2: SAP 2024-2033 Updated focus to meet emerging challenges and opportunities

Building on the first SAP (2014-2023), this updated 2024-2033 Programme strengthens focus on the following aspects in order to meet emerging challenges and developments:

ALDFG – focused effort to address abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gears

Area-based conservation – building on MPA network design but with new focus on OECMs in support of Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

Circular economy – focused effort to ‘close the loop’ on marine-based waste streams by avoiding waste, and deriving greater value from residual waste

GESI – mainstreaming of Gender Equity and Social Inclusion across all SAP aspects

IUU fishing – specific focus on small-scale IUU fishing in transboundary areas, to complement existing efforts by RPOA-IUU

Marine plastic pollution – focus on marine plastic pollution, in line with global efforts to address the issue

Mainstreaming climate change response - in recognition of the cross-cutting nature of the problem, climate change actions are integrated within Components 1-4, supporting national and global climate commitments (including the UNFCCC).



CHAPTER 2

STATE OF THE ATS



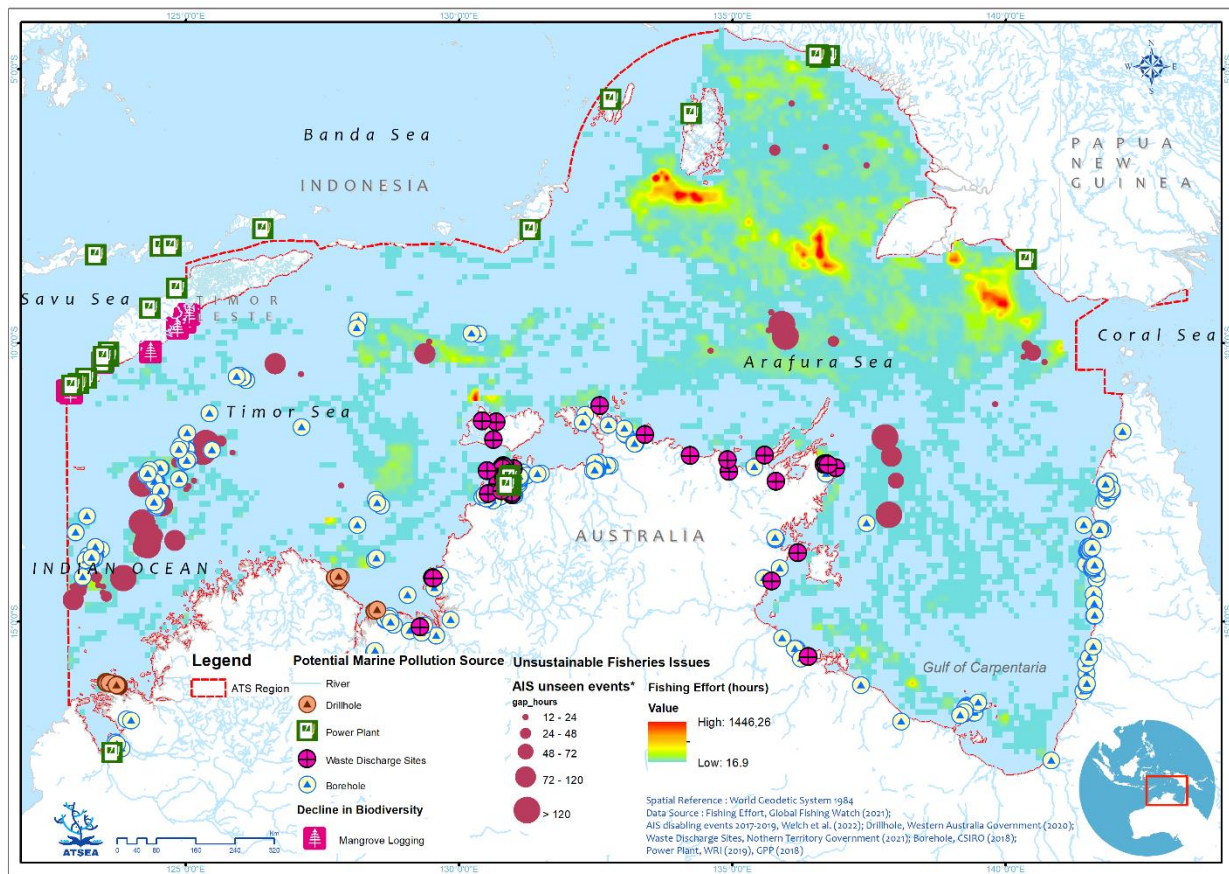
The following section highlights the current state of the ATS region with particular focus on the issues to be addressed by this SAP. A more comprehensive assessment of issues is provided in the 2023 TDA.

2.1 Transboundary Issues Identified in 2023 TDA

Table 1 – Priority transboundary environmental issues identified in TDA (ATSEA-2, 2023)

ATS Priority Transboundary Issues (TDA 2023)	Fundamental concerns
Pollution of marine and coastal environment	1.1 Oil spills
	1.2 Harmful marine debris including plastic pollution
	1.3 Abandoned, lost and discarded fishing gear (ALDFG)
	1.4 Land-based pollution and sedimentation
Ecosystem, habitat and biodiversity decline	2.1 Climate impacts on ecosystems, ecological communities and critical habitats
	2.2 Declining populations of endangered, threatened, and protected (ETP) species
	2.3 Deterioration of critical ecosystems and habitats resulting from anthropogenic causes
Unsustainable capture fisheries	3.1 Unsustainable harvest levels (overfishing)
	3.2 Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing
	3.3 Fisheries bycatch
	3.4 Fisheries impacts on habitats

Source: ATSEA-2, 2023



Source: ATSEA-2, 2023

Figure 3 – ATS region with transboundary environmental issues mapped

Marine and Land-Based Pollution

ATSEA regional assessments identified two main pollution sources that will have region-wide impacts – those are oil spills and marine debris. A modelling simulation using GNOME discovered that the Timor Sea is the primary oil spill hotspot in the ATS, with the Southern part of Rote Ndao and Timor-Leste the most prone to oil spills. Meanwhile, the Aru Sea was identified as a seafloor debris hotspot. ATSEA-2 has initiated support to build local capacities in oil spill preparedness and response and to develop pollution prevention and control plans as part of the integrated coastal management (ICM) process in Rote Ndao, Indonesia and Manatuto, Timor-Leste.

Biodiversity Conservation

ATS region hosts numerous endangered, threatened and protected (ETP) species, including dugongs; six species of sea turtles (green turtle, hawksbill, loggerhead, leatherback, olive ridley and flatback turtle) (ATSEA-2, 2023); and several species of sharks and rays (such as large-tooth sawfish, green sawfish and the whale shark). All species are listed as vulnerable, endangered or critically endangered and are protected by national legislations and international conventions. To boost sea turtle conservation in the region, ATSEA-2 facilitated the development of the Sea Turtle Regional Action Plan which could act as reference/guidance for ATS countries to conserve their sea turtles. The action plan has six themes: 1) addressing discards of fishing gear, 2) establishing a funding mechanism, 3) addressing sea turtle bycatch in the Arafura Sea prawn fishery, 4) enhanced conservation of sea turtles in Timor-Leste, 5) in Indonesia with a focus on Aru and 6) in Papua New Guinea.

A valuation of ecosystem services based on data from 2016-2020 data shows that the ATS region contributes approximately \$US 7.3 billion annually to the economies of ATS countries. Further, a regional MPA Network Design and Roadmap developed by ATSEA-2 was endorsed by the 3rd RSC. Table 2 shows MPA coverage data for the ATS region.

Table 2 – MPA coverage in ATS, by country

	Total area in ATS (km ²)	% of ATS area	MPA coverage (km ²)	% of territorial waters in ATS declared as MPA	MPA coverage as % of total ATS area
AUS	1,000,902	59.96	249,802	25.00	14.97
IND	568,020	34.03	11,675	2.06	0.70
PNG	23,436	1.40	907	3.87	0.05
TL	76,799	4.60	935	1.22	0.06
Total	1,669,157	100%	263,319	-	15.78%

Sustainability of fisheries

At regional level, ATSEA works to improve fisheries management for red snapper, especially the saddle-tail snapper, crimson snapper, red emperor and gold-band snapper. Based on FAO statistics (Knuckey et al.,2021), the ATS region contributed 2.76% or 13,604 tonnes of the estimated global Lutjanid catch for 2019. The baseline review conducted in 2020-2021 shows that snapper fisheries in the ATS are diverse and include small and industrial scales. The stock status of red snappers also varies with Australia's stock considered to be sustainable, Indonesia's overfished, and undefined for both Timor-Leste and Papua New Guinea. Threats on the fisheries such as stock sustainability, ecological impacts of fishing operations, bycatch, transboundary conflict, conflict between sectors, lack of infrastructure and market access, policy to support rights-based management of small-scale fisheries, IUU fishing and lack of consistent/unified data across regions were identified and would be addressed by implementing the recently developed EAFM plan for red snapper fisheries in the ATS region.

IUU fishing is a prevalent threat for the ATS region. To understand the threat better, ATSEA-2 facilitated a regional assessment to quantify law enforcement capabilities by calculating losses avoided through the apprehension of both domestic and foreign vessels. The assessment covered the period of 2015-2019 and shows the estimated prevented volume loss for ATS countries is 40,154 tonnes and the prevented economic loss is \$US 80,307,576. Due to limited information, the study focused mostly on illegal fishing (i.e., the 'I' in IUU Fishing), and strengthened monitoring and reporting would support country-level efforts to address the unregulated and unreported elements of IUU. Further, strengthening monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) capacity would help to reduce economic and social impacts on communities due to IUU fishing. ATSEA acknowledges the importance of regional networks in combating IUU fishing, particularly through the RPOA-IUU's ATS MCS sub-regional group. ATSEA will also continue to support implementation of the RPOA-IUU's annual workplan. At national/local level, ATSEA will strengthen countries' capacity to address IUU fishing through stronger community-based surveillance and monitoring.

2.2 Cross-cutting Issues

Climate Change

A regional climate change vulnerability assessment facilitated by ATSEA-2 in 2023 highlights specific climate-related risks to marine and coastal ecosystems in the ATS (Johnson et al., 2021). Based on global climate models moderate-emissions (RCP4.5) and high-emissions (RCP8.5) 2070 scenarios for 2070, regional results were spatially variable.

The assessments showed shallow coral reefs to be highly vulnerable to climate change, particularly around Barique subdistrict in Manatuto municipality, Timor-Leste and Tual, Indonesia. Seagrass meadows were most vulnerable in the Gulf of Carpentaria, Australia due to hotspot sea surface temperature increases. Lastly, mangroves and estuarine habitats were most vulnerable in Timor-Leste and western Papua New Guinea. Species vulnerability was also highly variable spatially; Green turtle was shown to be a species of high vulnerability across most sub-regions, while dugong, barramundi, black jewfish, Spanish mackerel, and mud crab are highly vulnerable in at least two sub-regions.

Gender Equity and Social Inclusion

As outlined in the updated TDA, structural gender and social inequalities in place in some ATS communities may mean that transboundary environmental issues affect women in different ways to men, and in some cases, more severely. Examples of impacts more likely to be felt by women may be village-level environmental problems (e.g., family health issues caused by pollution issues), reduced food security at the household level, or in some instances, women shouldering more of the burden of environmental remediation than men.

Ecosystem governance issues

Existing governance of the ATS region and its environmental assets is a mosaic of both binding and voluntary frameworks and measures operating at the regional level, and the national and sub-national regulatory environments and sectoral arrangements within the four littoral countries and sub-national jurisdictions. The 2023 TDA identified ineffective governance as a root cause or indirect driver of transboundary issues; encompassing related challenges of insufficient management resources, poor or inconsistent compliance and failure to enact regulations, and ineffective coordination. Governance failures were found to exacerbate transboundary environmental issues in the ATS. Strong, effective, and participatory governance approaches were considered necessary to enable the mitigation strategies needed to address the priority issues.



CHAPTER 3

STRATEGIC ACTION PROGRAMME



In response to the priority transboundary environmental issues in the ATS identified in the 2023 Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA), the following section presents a framework of Targets, Priority Actions, and Supporting Activities required to achieve the shared vision for the ATS: **A healthy, resilient and productive ATS that supports human wellbeing and nature.**

3.1 Shared Principles, Frameworks and Approaches for Implementing the SAP

Anchored on the overarching concepts of sustainable development, ocean-based sustainable blue economy and human rights, the four littoral countries of the ATS agree to implement this SAP with regard to the following:

- Principle of Sovereignty
- The Precautionary Approach
- The Principle of Fair and Equitable Benefit-sharing
- Principle of Gender Equity
- Principle of Participation and Inclusivity
- Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC)
- Notification, consultation, and negotiation

Also embodied in the SAP are the following natural resource management approaches:




- Ecosystem approach
- Ecosystem approach to fisheries management (EAFM)
- Integrated coastal management (ICM)
- Adaptive management approaches

Definitions and brief descriptions of these principles and approaches are included in Annex 4.

3.2 SAP Structure

This SAP is structured around issue-based program **Components**, each with its own **Goal**, and several subordinate **Operational Objectives**, supported by enabling **Governance Objectives**, to be achieved within the SAP implementation period.

There are a total of four SAP components and six operational objectives, as shown below:

 <p>SAP COMPONENT 1: Reducing marine and coastal plastic pollution including ALDFG</p>	 <p>SAP COMPONENT 2: Preventing and responding to oil spills</p>	 <p>SAP COMPONENT 3: Reducing incidence of small-scale IUU Fishing in transboundary areas</p>	 <p>SAP COMPONENT 4: Increase resilience of regional populations of endangered, threatened and protected (ETP) species and critical habitats</p>
<p>COMPONENT GOAL: Reduction of the levels of marine and coastal plastic pollution, including ALDFG, in the ATS</p>	<p>COMPONENT GOAL: Ecosystem impacts from oil spills prevented or reduced through enhanced regional coordination and best practices</p>	<p>COMPONENT GOAL: Reduce small-scale illegal fishing through improved management arrangements in transboundary areas in support of RPOA/NPOA-IUUF</p>	<p>COMPONENT GOAL: Important regional populations of priority ETP species and their critical habitats are stabilised</p>
<p>OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 1.1: Reduce inputs of plastic pollutants from land-based sources</p>	<p>OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 2.1: Strengthen regional coordination and capacities on oil spill preparedness and response</p>	<p>OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 3.1: Create effective agreements and incentives to improve management of small-scale fisheries operating illegally in transboundary areas</p>	<p>OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 4.1: Enhance collaborative management of priority transboundary or migratory populations of ETP species</p>
<p>OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 1.2: Reduce inputs of Abandoned, Lost and otherwise Discarded Fishing Gear (ALDFG)</p>			<p>OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 4.2: Build resilience of ATS critical habitats and ecosystems against climate change through effective area-based management</p>
<p>Cross-cutting Objective 1: Mainstreaming Climate Change</p> <p>Objective: Effective mainstreaming of climate change response in SAP governance and implementation</p>			
<p>Cross-cutting Objective 2: Gender equity and social inclusion</p> <p>Objective: Effective mainstreaming of GESI in SAP governance and implementation</p>			
<p>SAP Governance Objectives</p> <p>Objective 1: Effective and efficient regional coordination to support SAP implementation</p> <p>Objective 2: Effective resource mobilisation to support SAP implementation</p>			

In order to achieve each of the six **Operational Objectives** contained in Components 1-4, this SAP document outlines a series of **Priority Actions**, and **Supporting Activities** at both regional and national levels (indicative, intended to guide national level implementation). These actions and activities are detailed in Section 3 for each project component. Each priority action has been prioritised (*high, medium* or *low*), with an indicative timeframe for implementation; *short-term (<3 years)*, *medium-term (3-5 years)* or *long-term (> 5years)*. A detailed implementation plan will be developed to support delivery of SAP priority actions, and to delineate roles and responsibilities among ATSEA members.

Further, **National Action Programmes** (NAPs) developed by ATS littoral countries will further outline the supporting actions and activities specific to that country that contribute to the overall attainment of Component Goals and Objectives. In the case of Indonesia and Timor-Leste, these NAPs build on the previous 2013-2022 NAPs, while Papua New Guinea will create its first NAP in 2023 in support of this updated SAP.

The SAP was developed to complement existing regional instruments, agreements and efforts, which are outlined in the TDA. Where appropriate, these are also outlined in the 'Links' row in tables for each SAP Component in Section 3.

3.3 SAP Components

The following section outlines the four major SAP components:

Component 1: Reducing marine and coastal plastic pollution including ALDFG

Component 2: Preventing and responding to oil spills

Component 3: Reducing the incidence of small-scale IUU fishing in transboundary areas

Component 4: Increase resilience of regional populations of endangered, threatened and protected (ETP) species and critical habitats

In the following section, the table for each component includes regional targets and indicators, priority actions, supporting regional actions and indicative national supporting actions. Timeframes and priority levels are also provided for each priority action. A detailed description of these target and indicator types is provided in Section 4.2.6. A complete list of SAP targets is included as Annex 6.

SAP Component 1: Reducing marine and coastal plastic pollution, including ALDFG

Component Goal: Reduction of the levels of marine and coastal plastic pollution including ALDFG in the ATS

ATS-SAP Component 1 is focused on reducing the impacts of plastic marine debris in the ATS marine environment. Globally, plastic pollution has increased tenfold since 1980 (IPBES, 2019) and plastic marine debris is a serious issue for the ATS region. ATSEA has identified shoreline debris hotspots including Rote Ndao and Timor-Leste’s south coast, while the ATS has been identified as a global hotspot for ALDFG. Drivers include the ‘direct action’ of purposeful or accidental discarding of fishing nets and other gears at sea, the dispersal of solid or plastic wastes from port facilities, coastal communities or land-based refuse dumps, and coastal watersheds. These issues may be exacerbated at times by a lack of adequate coastal sanitation infrastructure or waste disposal facilities in ports and coastal settlements.

This SAP focuses on reducing plastic pollution of the marine environment from **land-based sources** (Operational Objective 1.1), and from **Abandoned, Lost and otherwise Discarded Fishing Gears, or ‘ALDFG’** (Operational Objective 1.2).

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 1.1: *Prevent and reduce inputs of plastic pollutants from land-based sources*

Operational Objective 1.1 is concerned with reducing flows of plastic pollution (sometimes referred to as ‘plastic debris’) from land-based sources into marine and coastal environments. Land-based sources of plastic pollution may include waste transported to the coastal zone by watersheds, poorly managed waste and litter originating from coastal cities and settlements, and waste emanating from maritime infrastructure sited in the coastal zone including ports and terminals. Plastic debris is among the most commonly encountered in the marine environment, where it may persist for centuries before breaking down into smaller and smaller particles; as a result, it can cause considerable harm over long periods, accumulating over time. Priority actions identified include the promotion of ‘source-to-sea’ and ‘circular economy’ approaches, improving regulatory frameworks, data and information, and regional capacity to respond to the issue.

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 1.1

Reduce inputs of plastic pollutants from land-based sources

TARGETS

At least 1 x regional and 4 x national/sub-national new policies, laws, agreements related to marine and coastal plastic pollution* (*process target*)

1,000-5,000 tonnes of plastic pollution in the marine and coastal environments is prevented through new on-ground pilot measures (*threat reduction target*)

At least 9 coastal communities engaged in reduction of plastic waste (*threat reduction target*)

At least 3 x new scalable circular economy pilot programs created with local communities (*socio-economic target*)

**may include national or sub-national government laws, policies, commitments, partnerships or other agreements including with private sector, civil society and/or communities*

TARGET INDICATORS:

New policies and agreements, implementation of programs, partnerships or partnership agreements in place, #of partnerships established (*process indicators*)

Quantification of plastic waste reduction - % or tonnes (*threat reduction indicator*)

of people involved in CE pilot program, # of communities with CE pilot program, # of people trained or engaged through outreach on CE (*socio-economic indicators*)

PRIORITY ACTIONS Timeframe – S,M,L Priority – L,M,H	SUPPORTING REGIONAL ACTIVITIES	INDICATIVE SUPPORTING NATIONAL ACTIVITIES	ACTION INDICATORS
1.1.1 Strengthen, and improve implementation of, existing legal frameworks and agreements related to marine plastic pollution (M,H)	Encourage and assist countries to develop and adopt legal and economic instruments to assist the management and prevention of marine litter/plastic pollutants from land-based sources	Develop new, or strengthen implementation of existing, policies, laws, regulations or economic instruments related to promote waste management/ reduce marine plastic pollution	Adherence of ATS countries to international and regional commitments related to land-based pollution reduction and prevention (e.g., Bali Declaration on the Protection of Marine Environment from Land-based Activities, etc.) through national/sub-national pollution and waste management policies, laws, agreements and implementation mechanisms
1.1.2 Promote application of ‘source to sea’ and integrated approaches for waste management/ reducing plastic	Provide technical assistance and capacity building on integrated approaches in line with sustainable waste/plastic	Develop new and/or implement existing integrated and scalable waste management programs/plans (e.g., as part of Integrated	Pollution management plans/programs and implementation mechanisms for plastic waste reduction in

<p>pollution from land-based sources (M, H)</p>	<p>pollution reduction and management</p>	<p>Coastal Management programs)</p> <p>Product replacement – e.g., partnerships with plastic producers and plastic packaging companies to phase out unnecessary and problematic single use plastics</p>	<p>identified hotspot areas (with funding and trained personnel)</p>
<p>1.1.3 Development of human resources, institutions, infrastructure and budgeting schemes in the implementation of reducing plastic waste from land-based sources (L,H)</p>	<p>Regional capacity building support for human resources, institutions and partnerships</p>	<p>Awareness raising and engagement in coastal communities to change behaviour</p> <p>Scalable pilot project to build or improve controlled waste disposal facility in coastal settlements</p>	<p>Capacity and awareness building programs/measures</p> <p># Waste disposal facilities built or expanded through partnership with the government and/or private sector.</p>
<p>1.1.4 Develop and implement a <i>Regional Circular Economy Blueprint</i> for the ATS with regional and country-level components (S, H)</p>	<p>Scope and develop the <i>Regional Circular Economy Blueprint</i> guidance document* based on best practice</p> <p>Document and disseminate the findings from local pilot projects to assist scaling up of successful approaches</p> <p>(*possibly including regional and country-level innovations related to partnerships, technology, markets, legal and economic instruments, site-based demonstrations, community-level</p>	<p>Create enabling policies and capacity building programs to support circular economy and blue economy development (e.g., promote extended producers' responsibility, developing markets for recycled products, etc.)</p> <p>Identify best practices and sector leaders in-country</p> <p>Pilot scalable, local-level circular economy innovations and initiatives based on the Blueprint*</p>	<p>Regional Circular Economy Blueprint endorsed and adopted</p> <p>% of Regional Circular Economy Blueprint actions implemented</p> <p>Number of community/private sector partnerships</p> <p>Number of community partnerships</p> <p>Capacity and awareness building programs/measures</p>

	<i>income generation, and capacity and training)</i>		
1.1.5 Establish data/monitoring systems to support decision-making (S,H)	Establish regional monitoring and information-sharing system or network	<p>Establish data/monitoring systems in identified hotspot areas to support local decision-making</p> <p>Facilitate the adoption of national/sub-national waste management information system / platform</p>	<p>Regional monitoring and information-sharing system or network on marine plastics established</p> <p>Pollution monitoring & reporting programs in place in identified hotspot areas (including pollution monitoring stations; frequency of monitoring & reporting)</p> <p># hotspot areas that have adopted waste management information system/platform</p> <p>Marine debris reduction data in ATS hotspot areas</p>
<p>LINKAGES:</p> <p>ATS/SAP: Regional EAFM Plan developed under ATSEA-2 (E1O2M5 on Prevent discarding of any non-biodegradable material (plastics and netting) from fishing boats)</p> <p>External: IMO 2017 Guidelines on the Implementation of MARPOL Annex 5 Global Partnership for Marine Litter (GPML/UNEP)</p>			

Operational Objective 1.2 is concerned with preventing and reducing pollution directly attributable to the fisheries sector, and in particular Abandoned, Lost or otherwise Discarded Fishing Gear (ALDFG). ALDFG is a recognised driver of declining populations of certain Endangered, Threatened and Protected (ETP) species occurring in the ATS, including sea turtles and marine mammals. Sometimes referred to as ‘ghost gears’, certain types of ALDFG (particularly nets) can contribute to ongoing mortality of these species for long periods after entering the marine environment. ALDFG has impacts beyond ETP species also; toxic load from plastics, impacts of microplastics on biodiversity and human health, aesthetic concerns that may conflict with marine recreational uses and impacts on traditional and cultural values. Priority actions identified include the development of a *regional action plan* to focus efforts on reducing ALDFG.

All SAP actions outlined below will be developed to be complementary to existing relevant frameworks and guidelines, including those of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) and Fisheries and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and any future global treaty on plastics.

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 1.2
Reduce inputs of Abandoned, Lost and Discarded Fishing Gear (ALDFG)

TARGETS

At least 1 x regional and 4 x national/sub-national new policies, laws, regulations, agreement, commitments related to ALDFG* (*process target*)

Adoption of 1x Regional Action Plan (RAP) to combat ALDFG (*process target*)

At least 1,000 metric tons of ALDFG is prevented through recovery and recycling by local communities** (*threat reduction target*)

At least 9 coastal communities / fishing associations engaged in reduction of ALDFG waste (*threat reduction target*)

>10% reduction in fisheries (ALDFG) waste observed in the marine environment during routine monitoring* (*environmental status target*)

At least 3 new pilot programs created with local communities to recover and recycle ALDFG waste (*socio-economic target*)

*may include national or sub-national government laws, policies, commitments, partnerships or other agreements including with private sector, civil society and/or communities

** subject to findings of the proposed ALDFG-RAP

TARGET INDICATORS:

New policies and agreements, new partnerships, programs and plans in place (*process indicators*)

Quantification of reduction in ALDFG waste, waste recovered and/or recycled, number of communities / fishing associations with ALDFG waste reduction initiatives (*threat reduction indicators*)

Volume of fishing waste observed in marine environment (*environmental status indicator*)

Tonnes of waste recycled, income generated (*socio-economic indicators*)

PRIORITY ACTIONS Timeframe – S,M,L Priority – L,M,H	SUPPORTING REGIONAL ACTIVITIES	INDICATIVE SUPPORTING NATIONAL ACTIVITIES	ACTION INDICATORS
1.2.1 Develop and implement Regional Action Plan to address ALDFG (M,M)	<p>Develop and consult Regional Action Plan for ALDFG, including research</p> <p>Develop guidelines on the prevention, reduction and processing of marine litter from fisheries including ALDFG, consistent with existing instruments and frameworks (including IMO/MARPOL and FAO)</p>	Support development of the RAP-ALDFG consistent with FAO ALDFG targets	Regional Action Plan for ALDFG in place
1.2.2 Develop regional collaborations for research, knowledge sharing, innovations and partnerships on ALDFG (M,M)	<p>Implement key actions outlined in ALDFG-RAP, which may include:</p> <p><i>targeted research and monitoring (including hotspot assessment), identification and analyses of hotspots</i></p> <p><i>facilitate regional sharing of ALDFG data, information and best practices</i></p> <p><i>link to circular economy opportunities related to ALDFG through the ATS Circular Economy Blueprint</i></p>	<p>Based on Regional Action Plan, implement site-based interventions which may include:</p> <p><i>ALDFG life-cycle, across the 4Rs (reduction, retrieval, reuse and recycling) port-based measures, fishing gear disposal),</i></p> <p><i>harmonization of instruments for collecting data on waste from fishing vessels in port data collection systems</i></p> <p><i>Develop partnerships with private sector and communities in reducing/managing ALDFG</i></p> <p><i>Enhance awareness and capacity in</i></p>	<p>Regional information-sharing platform for ALDFG established</p> <p>ALDFG research monitoring & reporting programs in place at national / sub-national levels (hotspot areas)</p> <p>Research/ academic/ government/ industry partnerships in place on ALDFG research, knowledge-sharing and innovations</p>

		<i>fisheries sector in order to reduce & process waste at sea</i>	
1.2.3 Strengthen, and improve implementation of existing legal frameworks and agreements related to ALDFG (M,H)	<p>Encourage and assist countries to develop/ strengthen legal and economic instruments and incentives to reduce ALDFG</p> <p>Promote regional compliance with MARPOL provisions (Annex V)</p>	<p>Develop/strengthen policies and legal and economic instruments to reduce ALDFG (e.g., <i>legislation requiring fishing gear marking, etc.</i>)</p> <p>Support national compliance with relevant instruments including MARPOL Annex V provisions and IMO mandatory gear marking provisions (currently under development)</p>	<p>National/sub-national ALDFG management policies, laws, agreements and implementation mechanisms in place</p> <p>National or local-level incentive schemes or industry partnerships in place to reduce ALDFG</p> <p>Adherence to international commitments for ALDFG reporting and fishing gear marking requirements</p>

LINKAGES:

ATS/SAP:

1.2.1 – See Operational Objective 4.2 (Sea Turtle Regional Action Plan, ALDFG content), and Regional EAFM Plan developed under ATSEA-2 (E1O1 on managing bycatch of non-target species to acceptable levels and E1O2M6 on ensuring all fishing gears are uniquely marked to identify ownership)

External:

- [IMO 2017 Guidelines on the Implementation of MARPOL Annex 5](#)
- [IMO Action Plan to Address Marine Plastic Litter from Ships \(Outcome 1\)](#)
- FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (1995)
- [FAO Voluntary Guidelines on the Marking of Fishing Gear](#)
- Global Partnership for Marine Litter (GPML/UNEP)
- Global Ghost Gear Initiative
- Relevant Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs)

SAP Component 2: Preventing and responding to oil spills



Component Goal: Ecosystem impacts from oil spills prevented or reduced through enhanced regional coordination and best practices

The Arafura and Timor Seas are rich in gas and oil reserves, which have the potential to provide high value to the communities of the ATS. However, the sector carries intrinsic risks; accidental discharge or loss of crude oil from offshore platforms and wells, tankers and pipelines may result in environmental impacts which can have significant flow-on economic and social impacts.

This SAP component is concerned with strengthening regional capacity to avoid and respond to oil spill by enhancing regional coordination and developing regional-level capacity reducing the incidence of oil spill, and in the case of a spill, minimising impacts by facilitating coordinated regional response, capacities and resources.

Operational Objective 2.1 is concerned with the establishment and operationalisation of a regional coordination mechanism, and the requisite capacities and resources required to reduce the incidence of oil spill and enhance the effectiveness of regional responses, especially in transboundary areas.

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 2.1 Strengthen regional coordination and capacities on oil spill preparedness and response			
TARGETS Adoption of 1 x regional coordination mechanism and Framework Agreement for oil spill preparedness and response in the ATS (<i>process target</i>) TARGET INDICATORS: # Successful adoption of new coordination mechanism, RCC endorsement of framework agreement (<i>process indicator</i>)			
PRIORITY ACTIONS Timeframe – S,M,L Priority – L,M,H	SUPPORTING REGIONAL ACTIVITIES	INDICATIVE SUPPORTING NATIONAL ACTIVITIES	ACTION INDICATORS
2.1.1 Gap Assessment on oil spill preparedness and response regulations, capacities and resources in the ATS region (S,M)	Coordinate the delivery of the regional Gap Assessment on oil spill preparedness and response	Contribute to the gap assessment on national oil spill preparedness and response regulations and capacities	Gap Assessment delivered

<p>2.1.2 Develop and adopt a framework agreement and work programme for transboundary cooperation on oil spill preparedness and response among the ATS countries (S,H)</p>	<p>Based on Gap Assessment, coordinate the development and adoption of a regional Joint Statement and Framework Programme for ATS transboundary cooperation on oil spill preparedness and response</p>	<p>National-level commitments by competent agencies to contribute to the RSWG-OS and Framework Programme</p> <p>Develop/strengthen and implement national and sub-national policies, laws, plans and programs in support of the regional Framework Programme, in line with national targets, priorities and needs</p>	<p>Framework Agreement / Joint Statement endorsed and implemented</p> <p>National contributions to Framework Agreement endorsed</p>
<p>2.1.3 Build capacity on regional oil spill preparedness and response (M,M)</p>	<p>Based on findings of gap assessment, develop and implement a capacity program focused on Oil spill preparedness and response – this may include: <i>adequate capacity of regulators to assess risks, application of risk frameworks, recovery, community-level action.</i>)</p> <p>Progress the adoption of oil spill preparedness, response and liability standards including OPRC 1990 and the International Oil Pollution Compensation (IOPC) Funds across the ATS region</p>	<p>Based on findings of gap assessment, build national and sub-national capacity on oil spill preparedness and response (<i>including regulatory, enforcement, offshore and shoreline response and clean up, oil disposal, damage assessment, compensation, etc</i>)</p>	<p>Capacity and awareness building programs/measures</p> <p>Adherence of ATS countries to relevant international and regional commitments related to marine pollution reduction, prevention and liability, including relevant IMO conventions, and the International Oil Pollution Compensation (IOPC) Funds</p>

<p>2.1.4 Develop regional resources to support oil spill preparedness and response in the ATS region (M,M)</p>	<p>Based on findings of gap assessment, develop resources – these may include</p> <p><i>Support regional sharing of data, knowledge and best practices, and develop resources & lessons learned</i></p> <p><i>Design and develop a regional early-warning / monitoring and reporting platform</i></p> <p><i>Scope and progress if appropriate the development of a joint regional oil spill contingency plan, including joint oil spill risk assessment and modelling and sensitivity mapping</i></p> <p><i>Develop and/or formalise partnerships with oil and gas industry and oil spill response associations</i></p>	<p>Strengthen national oil spill contingency plans in concert with the joint regional oil spill contingency plan (including monitoring and reporting system, early warning system and response arrangements)</p>	<p>Regional oil spill information / knowledge sharing system developed</p> <p>Regional oil spill early-warning / monitoring and reporting platform established</p> <p>Joint Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan endorsed</p> <p>Partnerships with oil and gas industry and oil spill response associations established</p> <p>National Oil Spill Contingency Plans created or aligned with Regional Plan</p>
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LINKAGES:

External:

[International Convention on Civil Liability \(CLC\) for Oil Pollution Damage \(IMO\)](#)
[IOPC Funds Convention](#)

SAP Component 3: Reducing the incidence of small-scale IUU fishing in transboundary areas

Component Goal: Reduce small-scale illegal fishing through improved management arrangements in transboundary areas in support of RPOA/NPOA-IUUF

Component 3 is focused on improving the management of those small-scale capture fisheries (and related post-harvest activities) that may be operating illegally, are unreported, or are unregulated in ATS transboundary areas. This may be due to a number of potential causes; small-scale fishers may be practicing their fishing operations according to long-standing cultural identities or customary practices that may span national jurisdictions, their activities may be influenced by trans-boundary market forces and supply chains (especially where formal markets are under-developed in remote areas), or they may operate in ambiguous legal contexts, such as disputed territories or in fishing grounds which straddle jurisdictional boundaries. This component is intended to complement the ongoing work of the existing RPOA-IUU regional coordination mechanism, including through the ATS MCS sub-regional group and RPOA-IUU's annual workplan. It also aligns with broader commitments made by ATS Countries to adopt the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (the 'SSF Guidelines').

Operational Objective 3.1 is focused on improving the management of transboundary small-scale fisheries that may be illegal, unreported, or unregulated. This will be based on assessments to identify and prioritise the transboundary 'hotspots' that require strategic interventions. Based on these assessments, a range of management tools and agreements may be developed to manage these sites, including bilateral, regional and multilateral agreements and instruments, management plans or community plans of action. These agreements will be supported by direct engagement with fishing communities, including targeted awareness raising and capacity building, and piloting local-level monitoring, control, and surveillance (MCS) schemes. Incentives, including community livelihood support and supply chain interventions, will be developed to address the drivers leading to IUU behaviour, and to improve livelihood outcomes for communities and small-scale fishers.

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 3.1

Create effective agreements and incentives to improve management of small-scale fisheries operating illegally in transboundary areas

TARGETS

A new regional assessment of transboundary small-scale IUU fishing (TB-SS-IUUF) is completed for the ATS (*process target*)

At least 3 new agreements (e.g., *FIP, management plans or community-based programs*) created to jointly manage fishing activity at identified IUU fishing hotspots in the ATS region (*process target*)

25-50% reductions in illegal fishing at three identified IUU fishing hotspot sites* (*threat reduction target*)

At least 3* small-scale fisheries benefit from improved management and reduction of IUU fishing* (*socio-economic target*)

At least 5,000 fisheries livelihood beneficiaries benefit from improved management, IUU fishing reduction and alternative livelihoods* (*socio-economic target*)

* *subject to findings of the regional assessment of small-scale IUU*

TARGET INDICATORS:

Regional assessment on small scale transboundary IUU fishing; Number of transboundary SSF-IUUF plans/agreements are developed and endorsed (*process indicators*)

Number of reported illegal fishing cases in identified SSF-IUUF hotspot sites (*threat reduction indicator*)

Fisheries incomes and other socio-economic indicators, number of fisheries livelihood beneficiaries (*socio-economic indicators*)

<p>PRIORITY ACTIONS</p> <p>Timeframe – S,M,L Priority – L,M,H</p>	<p>SUPPORTING REGIONAL ACTIVITIES</p>	<p>INDICATIVE SUPPORTING NATIONAL ACTIVITIES</p>	<p>ACTION INDICATORS</p>
<p>3.1.1 Identify and evaluate TB-SS-IUUF hotspots in order to prioritise transboundary response (S, H)</p>	<p>Develop and endorse a methodology to conduct the hotspot assessments</p> <p>Conduct analysis to identify hotspots and root causes and profile fisheries</p> <p>Assess, select and prioritise intervention sites</p>	<p>Develop appropriate local working definition/s of SSF to support hotspot assessment</p> <p>Facilitate hotspot analyses at local level</p> <p>Document fisheries-related cultural and traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) at identified hotspots</p>	<p>Regional assessment of TB-SS-IUUF hotspots</p> <p>Number of hotspots prioritised for action</p>
<p>3.1.2 Based on outcomes of regional evaluation 3.1.1, develop effective agreements, management plans or Community-Based</p>	<p>Facilitate regional or bilateral/trilateral engagement to develop agreements, fisheries management</p>	<p>Develop National/sub-national CB-POA/ fisheries management plans considering EAFM, RBM and GESI principles, climate</p>	<p>Number of identified hotspots covered by agreements, Community-Based Programs and management plans</p>

<p>Programs or Plans of Action (CB-POA) to manage priority small-scale transboundary IUU fishing (M,H)</p>	<p>plans, CB-POA, considering relevant international and regional commitments related to combating IUU fishing and sustainable fisheries (e.g., NPOA-IUU, FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, etc.)</p> <p>Within agreements, fisheries management plans, CB-POA for identified hotspots, incorporate principles of climate-readiness, EAFM, RBM, GESI, and sustainable blue economy development etc.</p>	<p>change adaptation actions and TEK (as appropriate)</p>	<p>TEK incorporated in agreements, Community-Based Programs and management plans In identified SS-IUUF hotspot sites</p> <p>Adherence to international and regional commitments related to combating IUU fishing and sustainable fisheries (e.g., NPOA-IUU, FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, etc.)</p>
<p>3.1.3 Operationalise agreements, Community-Based Programs and management plans (3.1.2) at the local level in partnership with fishing communities (M,H)</p>	<p>Facilitate regional consultation and/or capacity building to support implementation of the agreements and effective engagement of fishing communities at identified SS-TB-IUU fishing hotspots</p> <p>Operationalise and monitor local-level MCS plans in transboundary areas</p>	<p>Operationalise agreements at the local level in partnership with fishing communities and associations</p> <p>Improve regulatory compliance at identified hotspots</p> <p>Improve community capacity in monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) and sustainable fisheries</p> <p>Local ‘Climate-proofing’ of local fisheries improvement plans and programs</p>	<p>Number of fishing communities implementing agreements, Community-Based Programs and management plans created</p> <p>Progress towards and /or implementation of regional and multilateral commitments related to combating IUU fishing and sustainable fisheries (e.g., NPOA-IUU, FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, FAO Port State</p>

		<p>Local-level awareness and capacity raising activities to engage fisher communities</p> <p>Implement relevant EAFM and Rights-based Management Plans developed under ATSEA-2</p>	<p>Measures Agreements, etc.)</p> <p>Fisheries indicators including landed catch volumes, CPUE, stock assessments, etc.</p>
<p>3.1.4 Support implementation of agreements, Community-Based Programs and management plans (from 3.1.2) with value chain interventions, livelihood diversification programs and capacity building and awareness (M,H)</p>	<p>Develop and pilot value chain interventions, livelihood diversification and capacity building programs</p> <p>Specific gender-focused interventions to improve livelihood outcomes for women and marginalised community members</p> <p>Share case studies and good practices on coastal livelihood diversification and resilience for replication</p>	<p>Implementation of pilot value chain interventions, livelihood diversification programs, and awareness and capacity building</p> <p>Improving access to market and promoting blue economic activities (e.g., for fisheries products, including handling, storage, sustainable energy, etc.).</p>	<p>Number of fisheries associations / fishers supported by interventions</p> <p>Women supported as proportion of total beneficiaries</p> <p>Number of case studies developed</p> <p>Socio-economic indicators relevant to interventions including catch value, household income, etc.</p>
<p>LINKAGES:</p> <p>ATS/SAP: ATS EAFM Plan for Red Snapper</p> <p>EXTERNAL: Regional and National Plan(s) of Action to Promote Responsible Fishing Practices including Combating Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (RPOA-IUU, NPOA-IUU)</p>			

SAP Component 4: Increase resilience of regional populations of endangered, threatened and protected (ETP) species and critical habitats

Component Goal: Important regional populations of priority ETP species and their critical habitats are stabilised

This project component is concerned with stabilising, and where possible recovering certain populations of Endangered, Threatened and Protected (ETP) species known to utilise marine and coastal habitats across the ATS region. The ATS region hosts ETP numerous species, including dugong; six species of sea turtles (such as green turtle, hawksbill, loggerhead, leatherback, olive ridley and flatback turtle); and several shark and ray species (such as largetooth sawfish, green sawfish and whale shark). ETP species may be species on international listings, such as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), the Convention of Migratory Species (CMS), and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), or those recognised within national or sub-national legislative instruments and protected species lists.

The component incorporates actions which considers the needs of regional populations of priority species. It also incorporates 'area-based measures' (including MPAs and other effective area-based conservation measures, or 'OECMs') intended to safeguard critical habitats of those species; such work will deliver broader benefits to a range of species, while in many cases also safeguarding ecosystem functions that benefit people.

Operational Objective 4.1 is concerned with strengthening regional collaboration in order to increase the effectiveness of ETP conservation efforts. In recognising that the ATS region is host to numerous ETP species which require focused, collaborative action, ATSEA will develop regional capacity to drive conservation and management of those ETP species with regional distribution, migratory habits, or that face regional or transboundary threats. Under the ATSEA Regional Governance Mechanism, regional coordination will be strengthened to facilitate regional responses to the drivers of declines among ETP species, and to assist existing national-level efforts where a regional dimension may be required. Further, identification of future priority target species and research priorities will be agreed by the regional mechanism to inform future collaborative action. Future initiatives under this component may include relevant collaborations with, for the example, the Secretariates of the CMS Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Dugongs (*Dugong dugon*) and their Habitats throughout their Range and the CMS Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Sharks. This component also includes the ongoing implementation of the existing *Regional Action Plan (RAP)* for Sea Turtles in the ATS, as developed under the auspices of ATSEA-2.

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 4.1

Enhance collaborative management of priority transboundary or migratory populations of ETP species

TARGETS

Delivery of regional priority actions in Sea Turtle RAP (*process target*)

At least one new RAP developed for priority transboundary ETP species or species groups* (*process target*)

At least 25% reduction in identified threats for prioritised ETP species** (*threat reduction target*)

Stable long-term trend in sea turtle nest counts / population census at selected ATS priority sites (*environmental status target*)

Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) incorporated in management systems for at least one ETP species / species groups (*socio-economic target*)

[mid-term: *additional targets related to ETP species may be developed for new priority groups***]

*other than sea turtles – already covered by ATS sea turtle RAP

**subject to ETP species prioritisation (4.1.2) and RAP targets, actions and priority sites (4.1.3)

TARGET INDICATORS:

Proportion of Sea Turtle RAP actions implemented; number of new RAP developed for priority transboundary ETP species or species group (*process indicators*)

Percentage reduction in identified threats for prioritised ETP species (*threat reduction indicator*)

Trend in sea turtle nest counts, population census at selected ATS priority sites (*environmental status indicators*)

of traditional communities engaged in management of ETP species (*socio-economic indicators*)

PRIORITY ACTIONS	SUPPORTING REGIONAL ACTIVITIES	INDICATIVE SUPPORTING NATIONAL ACTIVITIES	ACTION INDICATORS
Timeframe – S,M,L Priority – L,M,H			
4.1.1 Deliver and harmonise key priority actions outlined in the <i>Regional Action Plan for the Protection of Sea Turtles in the Arafura and Timor Seas</i> ('RAP') and sea	Implement regional-level actions outlined in the sea turtle RAP Facilitate implementation of	Implement national-level actions outlined in the sea turtle RAP Implement and harmonise transboundary actions of NPOAs (AUS, IND)	% of actions in RAP and NPOAs implemented Monitoring and reporting systems in place including data collection on

<p>turtle National Plans of Action (NPOAs) (M,H)</p>	<p>transboundary aspects of AUS and IND NPOAs</p> <p>Scope opportunities to support Papua New Guinea and Timor-Leste to develop NPOAs for sea turtles</p> <p>Coordinate additional baseline studies, mapping and monitoring of sea turtles and critical habitats to address identified gaps in the RAP</p>	<p>Build awareness and capacity in relation to local monitoring and bycatch handling of sea turtles</p> <p>Share relevant local research and data and support further studies and monitoring to help address information gaps</p>	<p>population status, biological data, turtle mortality from known threats (e.g., observer data), etc.</p> <p>New NPOAs scoped for PNG and T-L</p> <p>Population status and biological data from key sites identified in RAP</p> <p>Available data on turtle mortality from known threats (e.g., observer data)</p>
<p>4.1.2 Regional assessment to prioritise target species/groups for collaborative action and research on transboundary and migratory populations of ETP species (M,H)</p>	<p>Assess existing measures related to collaborative action on ETP species in the region and identify synergies and opportunities</p> <p>Coordinate a regional process of prioritization of ETP species for collaborative action and research</p> <p>Facilitate data and information sharing among ATS country</p>	<p>Contribute to the regional prioritisation of target ETP species and groups for collaborative action and research</p>	<p>Completion and endorsement of regional prioritisation exercise</p>
<p>4.1.3 Implement a regional program of collaborative research and action on regional transboundary ETP species in ATS (L,H)</p>	<p>Based on regional prioritisation,</p> <p><i>develop and implement climate-smart Regional Action Plans (RAPs) for priority ETP species</i></p>	<p>Develop, strengthen and harmonise NAPs or NPOAs on identified priority TB and migratory ETP species, considering climate-related strategies</p>	<p>Regional and national actions and plans to conserve ETP species (i.e., RPOAs, NBSAPs, recovery plans, etc.)</p> <p>Regional research and information-</p>

	<p><i>Regional collaborative research on TB and migratory populations of ETP species</i></p> <p>Progress the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) across the ATS region and other relevant policies</p>	<p>Support collaborative research and information sharing on regional transboundary ETP species in ATS</p> <p>Climate-related strategies considered in RAPs and NAPs for priority ETP species</p>	<p>sharing platform on priority transboundary ETP species</p> <p>Adherence of ATS countries to relevant international and regional commitments on the protection of key and endangered marine species (CITES, CMS, CTI, etc.) through national policies and laws and enforcement mechanisms</p>
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LINKAGES:

ATS/SAP:

Regional Action Plan for the Protection of Sea Turtles in the Arafura and Timor Seas ('RAP'), Themes 1-2 (regional) and 3-6 (national-level).

Theme 1: Addressing discards of fishing gear given the impacts on sea turtles

Theme 2: Establish funding mechanism

Theme 3: Addressing sea turtle bycatch in the Arafura Sea prawn fishery

Theme 4: Enhanced conservation of sea turtles in Timor-Leste

Theme 5: Enhanced conservation of sea turtles in Indonesia with a focus on Aru

Theme 6: Enhanced conservation of sea turtles in Papua New Guinea

EXTERNAL:

Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)

Operational Objective 4.2 is concerned with protecting the critical habitats of ETP species through the implementation of area-based management; primarily the implementation of a regional network of marine protected areas (MPAs), as well as appropriate other effective (area-based) conservation measures (OECMs). As environmental stresses on critical habitats mount, establishment and effective management of a regionally representative network of MPAs and OECMs can help to safeguard species by protecting habitats and maintaining connectivity. MPA networks can help to protect ETP species and their critical habitats from the worst impacts of climate change by reducing stresses, aiding adaptation (such as providing greater areas for species' movement to avoid stresses) and by boosting reproductive capacity *in situ*, supporting repopulation across the region.

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 4.2

Build resilience of ATS critical habitats and ecosystems against climate change through effective area-based management

TARGETS

70,000km² of new MPAs gazetted (20% MPA coverage for ATS, up from 2023 baseline of 263,000km², or 16% coverage) (*process target*)

10,000 km² of new Other Effective (area-based) Conservation Measures (OECM) created (*process target*)

A new regional commitment to achieve 20-30% of ATS under effective area-based protection to contribute to 30x30 ambition, incorporating both MPAs + OECMs (*process target*)

Management effectiveness increases of at least 25% are observed in at least 25% of MPAs in the ATS MPA network (*threat reduction target*)

25-30% of ATS critical habitats and ecosystems under effective area-based protection (*'environmental status' target*)

Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) incorporated in management systems for at least 3x sites (*'socio-economic' target*)

TARGET INDICATORS:

% areal coverage of new MPAs and OECMs; regional commitment to contribute to 30x30 ambition (*process indicators*)

MPA management effectiveness (*threat reduction indicator*)

% of critical habitats and ecosystems under effective area-based protection (*environmental status indicator*)

of traditional communities engaged in area-based management (*socio-economic indicator*)

PRIORITY ACTIONS	SUPPORTING REGIONAL ACTIVITIES	INDICATIVE SUPPORTING NATIONAL ACTIVITIES	ACTION INDICATORS
Timeframe – S,M,L Priority – L,M,H			
<p>4.2.1 Improve coverage and management effectiveness of MPAs in the ATS considering MPA Network Design and needs of ETP species (M, H)</p>	<p>Update the MPA Network plan to support SAP implementation (incorporating MPAs, OECMs and needs of priority ETP species)</p>	<p>Delivery of agreed national actions related to the ATS MPA Network</p> <p>Develop climate-SMART Marine Spatial Plan (MSP) to strengthen MPA</p>	<p>Area coverage of MPAs and OECMs (km²)</p> <p>National policies and laws and enforcement mechanisms in support of the MPAs/MSP/MPA network</p>

	<p>Regional collaboration on delivery of agreed elements of the ATS MPA Network Design</p> <p>Develop guidance for incorporating Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) in MPA management</p> <p>Scope and facilitate the creation of a new transboundary MPA</p> <p>Coordinate regional capacity building and exchanges in support of the ATS MPA network</p>	<p>network and protect critical habitats</p> <p>Promote alternative, supplementary and sustainable livelihoods associated with MPAs</p> <p>Incorporate TEK in MPA planning and management</p>	<p>Inclusion of conservation of threatened and migratory species in MPA design (Area allocated for the protection of ETP species & ETP critical habitats)</p> <p>MPA management effectiveness (e.g., EVIKA, METT)</p> <p>Alternative, supplementary and sustainable livelihoods in MPA areas</p>
<p>4.2.2 Improve resilience of ETP species by protecting identified critical habitats outside of MPAs (M,H)</p>	<p>Identify and assess ETP critical habitats outside MPAs</p> <p>Regional assessment of OECM (Other Effective Area based Conservation Measures) opportunities to protect critical habitats</p>	<p>Contribute data and expertise to assessments</p> <p>Develop and implement OECM opportunities to increase protection of critical habitats</p> <p>Integrate local knowledge and Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) in management of critical habitats</p>	<p>Number of ETP critical habitat assessments undertaken</p> <p>Number of ETP species covered by Assessments</p> <p>Number of OECM plans developed (incorporating TEK as appropriate)</p>
<p>4.2.3 Support management of critical habitats in priority MPAs and OECMs through the development/inclusion of climate change</p>	<p>Coordinate the regional adoption of 'Mainstreaming of Climate Change into Local Assessments and Planning: Guide for Facilitators and</p>	<p>Coordinate Climate Change Vulnerability Assessments (CCVA) of critical habitats to inform adaptation and management strategies/plans</p>	<p>Number of climate change strategies developed for, or incorporated in MPAs and OECM plans</p>

adaptation strategies (M,H)	Decision-makers' (CCVA Guide)	Develop and implement local adaptation strategies at priority sites based on CCVAs Capacity building on climate change adaptation based on the Guide for Facilitators and Decision-makers	
<p>LINKAGES:</p> <p>ATS/SAP: MPA Network Design and Roadmap</p> <p>EXTERNAL: Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) / Kunming-Montreal Global biodiversity framework (GBF) National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAP)</p>			

3.4 Mainstreaming Climate Change and GESI Objectives in the SAP

In addition to the four issue-driven SAP components outlined above, this SAP incorporates two ‘cross-cutting’ strategic objectives to be mainstreamed in the implementation of the four components.

Climate change objectives are included to ensure that climate change is effectively mainstreamed in the implementation of this SAP (i.e. in addition to specific climate change priority actions outlined in Components 1-4).

Gender, equity and social inclusion (GESI) objectives are also incorporated to ensure that GESI considerations and practices are mainstreamed in the implementation of this SAP.

3.4.1. Mainstreaming Climate Change

Climate change is recognised as a driver (or a set of related drivers) of the transboundary environmental issues outlined in the TDA. To varying degrees, climate change is relevant to the four SAP components – both from a mitigation perspective (reducing regional contributions to the anthropogenic causes of climate change) and with regards to adaptation (reducing or managing the impacts of climate change within the system bounds).

Accordingly, climate change has been considered throughout the development of this plan, and in the design of SAP priority actions. This is to ensure that SAP actions are both resilient in the face of climate change impacts, and adaptive enough to respond to changing conditions.

Many of the specific climate-related drivers exist beyond the bounds of the ATS system and may therefore not be adequately addressed by the SAP. However, this SAP incorporates both mitigation and adaptation responses that are possible within the ATS.

Key references for this SAP include:

- ATSEA Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment (CCVA) – Johnson, 2021
- Guide for Facilitators (“The Guide”): Using the Arafura & Timor Seas Climate Change Vulnerability Assessments Results (Johnson, 2021b)

How climate change contributes to the issues

The Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment (CCVA) conducted by ATSEA-2 for the ATS region identified species, habitats, and fisheries vulnerable to future climate change, and identified local vulnerability ‘hotspots’ where impacts may be more pronounced. Further, a suite of potential social and economic impacts has been identified through causal chain analyses; these included coastal inundation and salination, increased risk of loss of property in coastal areas, increased risk of damage to maritime and coastal infrastructure, food insecurity and public health impacts. Annex 5 highlights some of the key impacts of climate change in relation to the priority transboundary issues identified.

Responding to climate change through mainstreaming

The following general approaches have been integrated within the SAP framework design, in order to support a climate change response in SAP implementation:

Dealing with uncertainty – this plan has been designed in such a way that it is implementable even where uncertainties exist (such as the severity or timeframes of certain climate change impacts)

No-regrets options – this plan incorporates measures that are of benefit regardless of the extent to which climate change impacts are realised

Integration measures – this plan incorporates integrated approaches, including ICM, marine spatial planning, and land-sea connectivity, all of which can support climate change mitigation and adaptation measures

Mitigation and adaptation – this plan incorporates mitigation measures (such as the protection of carbon-rich coastal ecosystems) alongside measures which support adaptation to the impacts of climate change

Mainstreaming a climate change response in the SAP

The table below highlights specific SAP objectives, targets and priority actions in support of climate change mainstreaming:

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE CC.1

Effective mainstreaming of climate change response in SAP implementation

TARGETS

Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment (CCVA) updated (*process target*)

Local high-resolution CCVAs produced (*process target*)

Implementation plans for Components 1-4 with climate-related actions (*process target*)

TARGET INDICATORS:

Proportion of SAP implementation measures that incorporate CCVA; proportion of SAP implementation measures that incorporate climate-related actions (*process indicators*)

PRIORITY ACTIONS	SUPPORTING REGIONAL ACTIVITIES	INDICATIVE SUPPORTING NATIONAL ACTIVITIES	ACTION INDICATORS
<p>CC.1.1 Incorporate Climate Change Vulnerability Assessments (CCVA) in decision-making</p>	<p>Update CCVAs periodically (at least every 5 years) to inform design and implementation of SAP site-based interventions</p> <p>Support the production of high resolution CCVAs for new implementation sites</p>	<p>Undertake local-level high resolution CCVAs for new implementation sites</p>	<p>Updated regional CCVA</p> <p>CCVAs in implementation / local sites</p>
<p>CC.1.2 Integrate climate change concerns in local planning and implementation</p>	<p>Promote adoption of ‘The Guide’ and other tools throughout the region</p> <p>Provide support and resources related to use of ‘The Guide’</p> <p>Update ‘The Guide’ as required</p>	<p>Apply ‘The Guide’ at local implementation sites to integrate climate change concerns in existing planning frameworks (e.g., ICM, EAFM, MPAs, etc.)</p>	<p>Local application of the guide</p>

CC.1.3 Implement climate-specific priority actions in Components 1-4	Refer to Annex 5	Refer to Annex 5	Component 1-4 actions and outputs showing climate change-related responses
CC.1.4 Contribute to regional capacity for responding to climate change	Incorporate climate change considerations in capacity building where appropriate, such as thematically-focused training (EAFM, or MPAs)	Align capacity building opportunities at local level	Capacity building materials showing climate change-related actions/considerations
CC.1.5 Contribute to CC research and monitoring	Identify opportunities within M&E framework to contribute	Contribute ATS data to relevant climate-related information systems, frameworks and datasets	Climate-related data and assessments in the ATS consolidated and shared in appropriate forums

3.4.2. Mainstreaming Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI)

In the SAP context, GESI considers social inclusion as it relates to gender (including women and men), children and youth, the elderly, those living with disabilities, Indigenous Peoples (IPs), religious minorities and migrant populations and other groups who may be marginalised.

Mainstreaming a GESI approach within the SAP not only benefits those marginalised groups who may be impacted by transboundary problems, it also increases the effectiveness of SAP governance and implementation.

For example, it can support women’s improved access to resources, support the use of traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) in resource management, ensure that policy encompasses the specific resource needs of a wide range of user groups, or ensure representative decision-making that includes a diversity of views, expertise and local knowledge.

Strategic entry points for GESI mainstreaming include:

- determination of the impact of transboundary problems on men and women
- production of gender-sensitive thematic studies and assessments
- gender analysis/collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data

ATSEA: GESI Progress to date:

Through the implementation of the 2012 SAP, ATSEA has delivered:

- Regional GESI Survey and Assessment focused on ATSEA-2 project sites, with country information
- Regional GESI Action Plan with monitoring and reporting guidance tools: Currently tailored to address specific targets/initiatives under ATSEA-2; Can serve as reference for development of a GESI Action Plan for SAP
- Site-specific Action Plans for Aru and Rote Ndao, Indonesia and linked to EAFM Plan and ICM program implementation; Can serve as example/reference for local GESI mainstreaming linked to integrated management approaches
- Targeted GESI initiatives where higher impact and effectiveness are envisioned
- Detailed assessments of the impacts of transboundary problems along gender lines (including through the use of causal chain analyses)
- Production of gender-sensitive regional thematic assessments

This progress provides a strong basis for the mainstreaming of GESI in the 2024-2033 ATS SAP. The table below highlights specific SAP objectives, targets and priority actions in support of GESI mainstreaming:

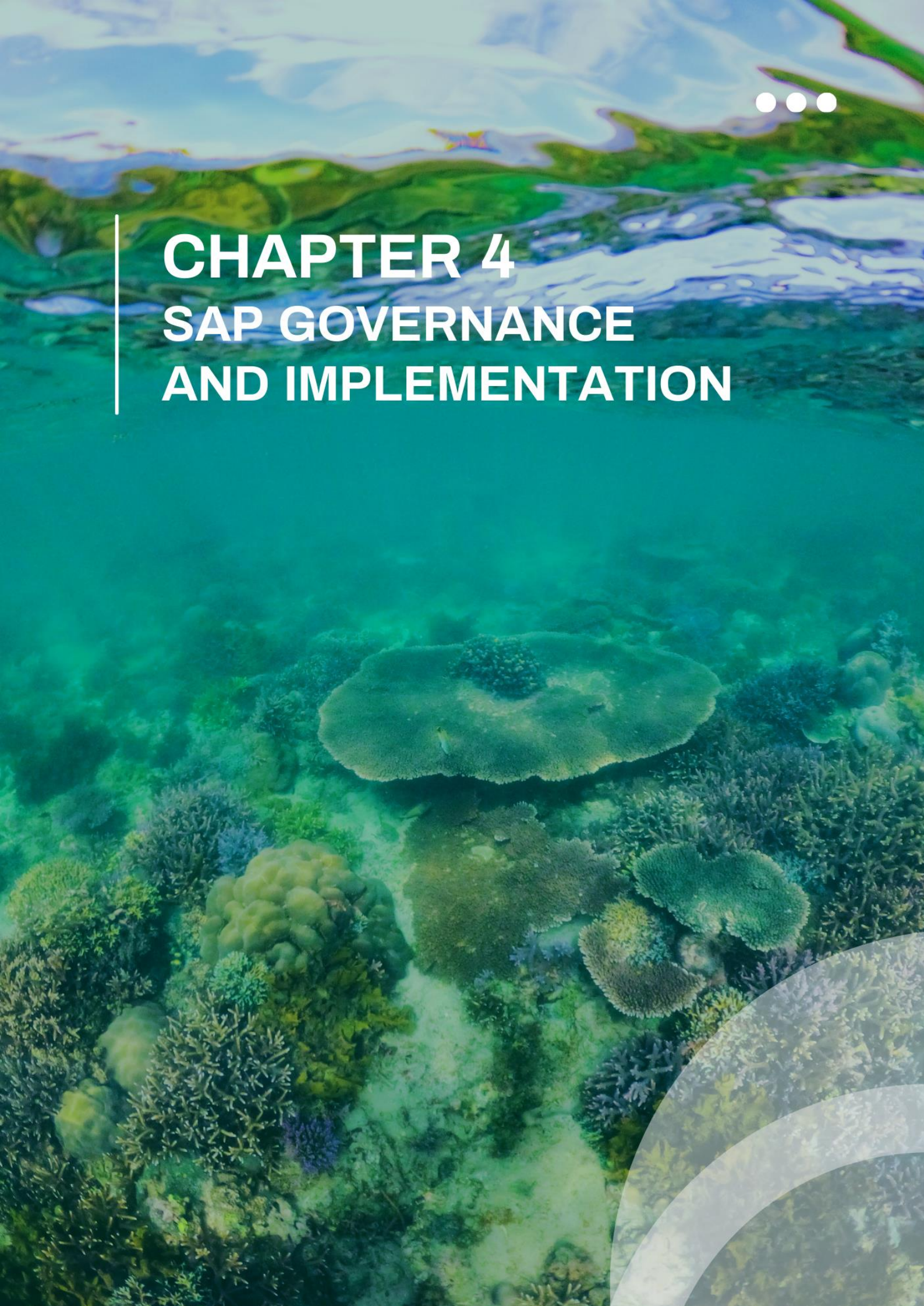
OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE GESI.1 Effective mainstreaming of GESI in SAP governance and implementation			
TARGETS ATSEA GESI Action Plan 2024-2033 (<i>process target</i>) Women represent at least 50% of beneficiaries of project livelihood activities and outcomes (<i>socio-economic target</i>)			
TARGET INDICATORS: Specific project participation targets for women, Indigenous Peoples (IPs) and other identified groups outlined in GESI Action Plan (<i>socio-economic indicator</i>)			
PRIORITY ACTIONS	SUPPORTING REGIONAL ACTIVITIES	INDICATIVE SUPPORTING NATIONAL ACTIVITIES	ACTION INDICATORS
GESI.1.1 Mainstream GESI considerations in SAP governance	Update the ATSEA GESI Action Plan and Social Inclusion Framework to support implementation of ATS-SAP 2024-2033	Incorporate GESI Action Plans in updated NAPs	ATSEA GESI Action Plan 2024-2033

	Develop SOP/Guide for mainstreaming GESI in SAP and NAPs planning and implementation		GESI mainstreamed in SAP and NAPs planning and implementation as reflected in M&E reports
	Ensure GESI is mainstreamed in ATSEA Communications, Stakeholder Engagement and Capacity Building	Incorporate GESI considerations in design of capacity building and awareness activities and access to information	GESI communications capacity and engagement targets contained in GESI Action Plan 2024-2033
	Ensure inclusive governance by incorporating targets for equal participation or representation in planning, decision-making, etc.		GESI governance targets contained in GESI Action Plan 2024-2033
	Implement the GESI framework and align with M&E system		GESI indicators incorporated in SAP M&E System
GESI.1.2 Mainstream GESI considerations in SAP implementation and field-based interventions	Ensure equitable access to SAP economic opportunities and alternative livelihoods	Scale up GESI best practices and lessons learned from ATSEA-2 through future site interventions and actions	Proportion of men and women benefiting from programme's economic and livelihoods opportunities
	Incorporate GESI in design and planning of site-based EAFM, ICM, area-based management, climate change adaptation and other-site based initiatives	Incorporate Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) and the rights of Indigenous Peoples (IPs) in SAP implementation of site-based interventions and policies	Proportion of men and women participating in programme design, planning and implementation. Number of activities specifically intended to overcome barriers to participation (e.g., for women, or marginalised groups)



CHAPTER 4

SAP GOVERNANCE AND IMPLEMENTATION



Good governance is an essential foundation for the implementation of this SAP, and more broadly, for the management of large marine ecosystems in support of a vibrant and sustainable regional blue economy. Similarly, robust frameworks for project management, implementation and monitoring are essential for successful delivery, along with the mainstreaming of cross-cutting concerns outlined in Section 3 (Climate Change, and GESI). The following section outlines the approaches, mechanisms and processes that will be followed in order to implement this SAP.

4.1. SAP Governance and Institutional Arrangements

The inaugural ATSEA SAP was established on the basis of a joint commitment by Australia, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and Timor-Leste for the improved management and governance of the Arafura and Timor Seas (ATS) ecosystems. While this joint commitment remains in place to support the second SAP iteration, the dimensions of the transboundary challenges, and coordination needs have evolved, requiring a more robust and refined governance framework to support the next decade of cooperative action.

A comprehensive governance framework for ATSEA was designed and endorsed¹ by the RSC. This framework builds on the first Ministerial Declaration, and incorporates the following key entities:

A **Council of Ministers** composed of Ministers from Country focal ministries, which will serve as the highest decision-making body for the regional collaboration, providing overall direction and priorities in line with the founding purpose of ATSEF/ATSEA;

A **Regional Coordination Committee (RCC)** composed of National Focal Points/Chair from each National Coordination Committee, which will serve as the regional policy and decision-making body to coordinate formulation of supporting programs and operational policies for the implementation of the SAP

A **Regional Secretariat** which will handle day-to-day coordination with the different entities of the RGM, including provision of technical, secretarial, monitoring and reporting services in support of SAP implementation.

Regional Stakeholder Working Group (RSWG) will provide expert/technical and cross issue advice to the Regional Coordination Committee (RCC) and may be organized in line with the Components of the Updated SAP. The RSWG may include representatives from NSWGs and ATS governments, selected regional experts, NGO, university, community/traditional owners/women's groups, private sector and development partners.

At national level, these structures would be supported by **National Coordination Committees (NCCs)**, **National Secretariats (NSs)** and **National Stakeholder Working Groups (NSWGs)**, to be created at the discretion of the four littoral countries.

Strategic Development Partners will be engaged to support and fund targeted projects contributing to SAP implementation.

¹ The Regional Governance Mechanism (RGM) for ATSEA was endorsed by the RSC at the July 2023 intersessional meeting.

FINAL ATS RGM STRUCTURE (COMBINED REGIONAL & NATIONAL)

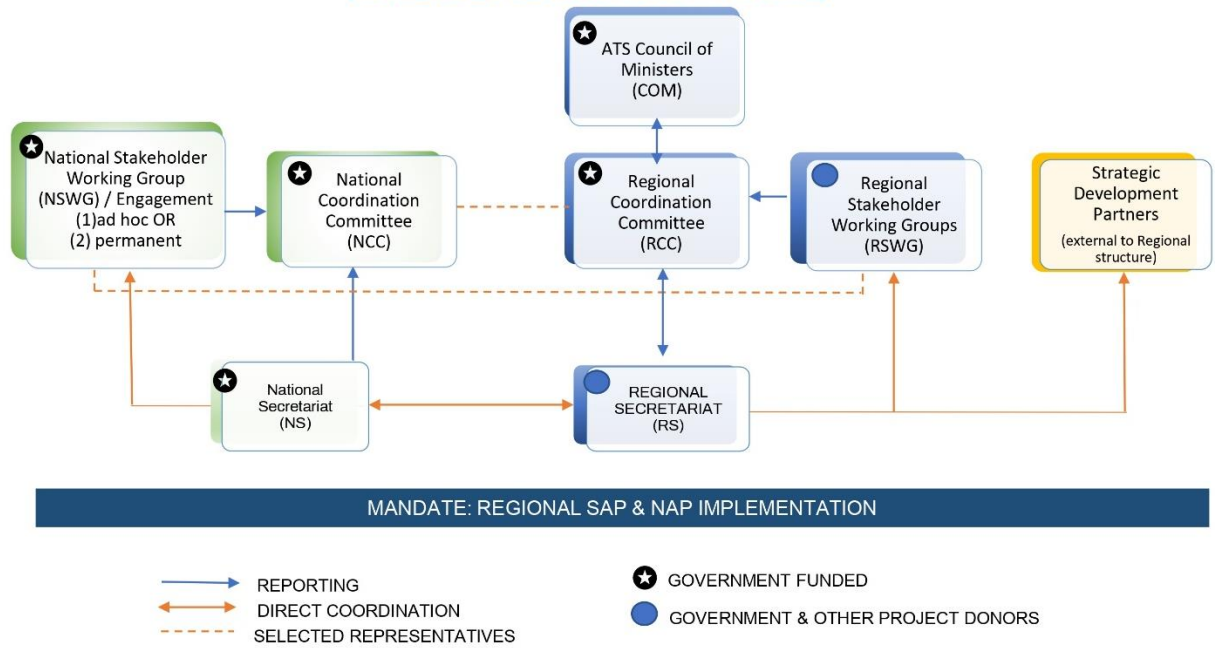


Figure 4 – ATS Regional Governance Mechanism (RGM)

The Regional Coordination Committee will have overall responsibility for the implementation of the SAP, including the creation and endorsement of work programmes and plans, overseeing Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting (MER), and resource allocation. The Regional Secretariat may support SAP implementation by creating and supporting Regional Stakeholder Working Groups (RSWGs) for programme components, effectively creating regional ‘teams’ to oversee implementation, coordination and component-level MER.

National Action Programmes (NAPs) may also be created to identify and align specific national-level actions with the regional-level objectives and priority actions outlined in the ATS-SAP 2024-2033.

4.2. Governance Objectives

Building on the governance structure outlined above, the following Governance objectives relate to how the SAP is implemented; the structures and processes required for successful implementation.

Objective G.1 is focused on creating and sustaining the regional coordination mechanisms, structures and processes required to effectively implement the SAP programme of work; this includes the creation and operation of appropriate coordination and management components including working groups within the regional governance mechanism, the development of 5-year implementation plans and annual work plans, the development of monitoring and evaluation and adaptive management systems, and processes to ensure inclusivity.

As a key enabling mechanism, the governance priority actions and targets are anticipated to be established within the initial three years of the program's inception, and are envisioned to continue to support the sustainable implementation of the SAP.

GOVERNANCE OBJECTIVE G.1 Effective and efficient regional coordination to support SAP implementation and adaptive management			
TARGETS A self-sustaining regional coordination mechanism in place to support SAP implementation and adaptive management (<i>process target</i>) M&E system implemented (<i>process target</i>) TARGET INDICATORS: Operational RGM; SAP Monitoring System (<i>process indicators</i>)			
PRIORITY ACTION	SUPPORTING REGIONAL ACTIVITIES	INDICATIVE SUPPORTING NATIONAL ACTIVITIES	ACTION INDICATORS
G.1.1 Establish regional coordinating mechanisms, enabling frameworks and funding mechanisms, to coordinate planning and implementation, and adaptive management of SAP	Operationalise the RCC and Regional Secretariat to serve as the regional coordination and management mechanism for the planning and implementation of the SAP Establish and operationalise RSWG to provide multi-sectoral and expert inputs to the planning and implementation of the SAP components Support the establishment and coordinate with national coordination mechanisms to ensure alignment of NAP implementation with SAP	Operationalise the national coordination and management mechanism to support the planning and implementation of the SAP and NAPs (including NCC, National Secretariat and National Stakeholder Working Groups) Develop appropriate enabling frameworks and policies to support SAP implementation	RGM established and operational with supporting staff and financial support secured RSWG established and operational 5-year SAP and NAP Implementation plans and annual work plans adopted by the RCC and NCCs # RCC, RSWG, NCC, NSWG meetings conducted # Ministers or high-level officials participating in CoM/Level of country representation at meetings Extent to which forum or meeting discussions

	<p>Establish partnerships with Development Partners to provide targeted support to SAP (and NAPs) implementation</p> <p>Implement the Investment and Financing Strategy and Plan in order to secure financing support/commitments to sustain RGM operations</p> <p>Organize regular meetings/forums to share progress and impacts of implementation of priority regional and national actions and agree on ways forward</p>		<p>or outcomes influence policies or strategies</p> <p>Level of multisectoral involvement in RSWG/NSWG (NGOs, women’s groups, private sector, etc.)</p> <p># Cooperation agreements or joint projects with Development Partners in support of SAP/NAPs implementation</p>
G1.2 SAP collaborative planning and adaptive management	<p>Facilitate 5-year SAP implementation planning and annual review</p> <p>Facilitate creation of annual workplans and budgets</p> <p>Conduct strategic reviews of SAP and NAPs priorities, priority actions and targets (after 5 and 10 years based on monitoring report, or as requested by RCC)</p>	<p>5-year SAP and NAP implementation planning</p> <p>Annual workplans</p>	<p>5-year SAP and NAP implementation plans and annual work plans prepared</p> <p>Reports on annual, 5-year, and 10-year SAP progress reviews (and responses to recommendations)</p>
G1.3 Programme Monitoring and Evaluation	<p>Develop and implement comprehensive M&E and reporting system to support SAP implementation,</p>	<p>Regular monitoring and evaluation of NAP implementation at NCC level, and reporting to RCC</p>	<p>SAP M&E reports prepared and disseminated at specified frequencies in appropriate formats</p>

	<p>assessment and adaptive management</p> <p>Package and disseminate M&E results to key targets</p> <p>SAP and NAP Monitoring Reports and reviews (annual, after 2.5, 5, 7.5 and 10 yrs)</p> <p>Present progress reviews of SAP in RCC and Ministerial Meetings</p> <p>Knowledge management</p>		(for RCC and key stakeholders)
G.1.4 Stakeholder Engagement and Communications	Updated stakeholder engagement and communications plan to be developed in support of SAP	Stakeholder engagement and communications plan to be developed in support of SAP and NAP	Updated stakeholder engagement and communications plan in support of the SAP and NAP developed and implemented

4.3. SAP Implementation and Resource Mobilisation

4.3.1. Implementation Plans

A detailed five-year implementation plan will be developed to facilitate ongoing delivery of the priority actions and supporting activities outlined in the SAP. The SAP implementation plan will link to National Action Plans (NAPs), and serve as the basis for annual workplans and budgets. It will also link SAP priority actions and activities to the Monitoring and Reporting System.

Further, in consultation with ATS member countries, a series of SAP concept notes has been developed to expedite implementation of key aspects and foundational activities of the SAP, to develop ‘proof of concept’ for key approaches, and to facilitate engagement with potential funders and stakeholders.

Implementation planning will be informed by an updated Theory of Change (ToC) with detailed results chains, intermediate outcomes, and updated assumptions, which will be developed following the RSC endorsement of the SAP. This will help to ensure that activities are well-targeted in terms of meeting SAP objectives, and that monitoring and evaluation of SAP implementation is able to measure impact at appropriate levels (regional, national, sub-national).

4.3.2. SAP Financing

As part of the regional response to the identified environmental issues outlined in Components 1-4, financial, human and institutional resources will be mobilised. The following section outlines the approach to be taken to identify and commit the resources required for successful SAP implementation.

SAP implementation will be financed according to a comprehensive financing plan, which is to be completed following the endorsement of the SAP by the RSC. Ongoing financing needs will be met through a diversity of fund sources and mechanisms and the financing strategy will outline the key actions and partnerships required to mobilise the funds required across SAP technical components 1-4, as well as supporting governance and institutional actions.

The financing plan will be developed based on a financial landscape assessment, detailed cost-benefit analysis (CBA), a 5-year cost estimate, extensive stakeholder consultation and preliminary identification of potential sources of funding and in-kind contributions, appropriate mechanisms and governance arrangements for financial management. Further, annual budgeting and financial planning will be required to provide detailed budgets in support of annual SAP action plans.

The SAP Financing Plan shall cover the following:

- Estimated contributions from national and subnational budgets (including existing and pipeline programs or funded projects that align with updated SAP);
- identification of financing gaps; and
- potential alternative financing opportunities through public-private partnerships, donor funding, and other arrangements.

Funding sources may include:

- Public financing including national and sub-national budgets, through combination of assessed member country and discretionary (voluntary) contributions
- In-kind contributions
- External grants, loans and technical assistance agreements
- Specialised and tailored financial instruments including funds
- Innovative finance measures including carbon and climate-related funds, payment for ecosystem services (PES), tariffs and fee systems,

During the SAP implementation period, ATSEA will also continue to support financing efforts through new initiatives including engagement with potential funders and new funding opportunities, partnering with the private sector and other actions, exploring emerging financing instruments and supporting littoral countries in their efforts to do the same. In doing so, it will be important to highlight the broad benefits of SAP financing, and frame them in the context of the regional blue economy.

4.3.3. Capacity Building

ATSEA recognises the importance of building capacity for the wide range of individuals, organisations, and institutions responsible for the ongoing management of the ATS region. Emerging challenges and changing conditions demand an ongoing commitment to building capability across a range of disciplines, including fisheries management, coastal zone management, community engagement, administration, law enforcement, and science and community engagement. This capacity development must occur at all levels, from community-level and resource user, to managers of relevant government agencies, and political leaders.

Priority actions contained in this SAP that include capacity building actions include: **1.1.4, 1.2.2, 2.1.3, 3.1.3, 3.1.4, 4.1.1, 4.2.1**

It is recommended that the above actions are used to inform the development of a detailed and integrated regional capacity building plan. This will initially focus on the capacity needs of the RGM at regional and national levels, to directly support SAP implementation. Expansion of this capacity building scope to a broader set of stakeholders will also be considered as SAP implementation progresses, particularly at SAP priority implementation sites.

4.3.4. Resource Mobilisation

Objective G.2 is focused on mobilising the financial and human resources required to implement the SAP. Further detail on sustainable financing for the SAP is also outlined in the SAP Financing Plan.

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE G.2 Effective resource mobilisation to support SAP implementation			
TARGETS RSC-endorsed SAP Financing Plan (<i>process target</i>) % of financing to implement the SAP secured (<i>process target</i>) % of SAP priority actions implemented (by 2029, 2033) (<i>process target</i>)			
TARGET INDICATORS Funds raised to support SAP implementation, number of persons receiving capacity building (<i>process indicators</i>)			
PRIORITY ACTIONS Timeframe – S,M,L Priority – L,M,H	SUPPORTING REGIONAL ACTIVITIES	INDICATIVE SUPPORTING NATIONAL ACTIVITIES	INDICATORS
	Develop and implement a detailed	Implement relevant national-level	RSC-endorsed SAP Financing Plan

<p>G.2.1 Funding and financing (S, H)</p>	<p>SAP Financing Plan [LINK]</p> <p>Promote the SAP/NAPs and financing plans for mainstreaming in the planning and financing framework of the countries and potential partners at the regional and national levels</p> <p>Identify and coordinate opportunities for project development for submission to donors and/or Strategic Development Partners</p> <p>Identify and consolidate good practices and approaches in developing innovative financing mechanisms for potential application in support of SAP/NAPs implementation</p>	<p>activities outlined in the SAP Financing Plan</p> <p>Streamline priority actions in the SAP and NAPs into national short, medium and long-term planning and budget frameworks</p> <p>Develop national/sub-national programs/projects in support of the SAP and NAPs</p> <p>Develop partnerships with the private sector in support of SAP/NAPs implementation</p>	<p>Financing contributions</p> <p>External funds raised</p>
<p>G.2.2 Capacity</p>	<p>Develop and implement a detailed SAP Capacity Plan (<i>i.e. consolidating capacity-related actions and activities from Components 1-4</i>)</p>	<p>Implement relevant national-level activities outlined in the SAP Capacity Plan</p>	<p>RSC-endorsed Capacity Plan</p> <p># trained</p> <p># courses delivered</p>

4.4. Programme Implementation Risk

A detailed risk assessment was conducted for the SAP, which highlights key risks associated with SAP implementation (Annex 7). The risks were categorized according to the following categories: 1) social and environmental; 2) financial; 3) operational; 4) organisational; 5) political; and 6) regulatory. These categories were based on the UNDP Managing Risks Across UNDP Programming and Operations Guide Notes. Proposed mitigation measures for the key risks were also identified in Annex 7.

While it is challenging to accurately forecast risks over a ten-year planning horizon, it is expected that many of the risks will remain relevant. Nonetheless, periodic reviews of the risk assessments will be conducted according to the SAP Monitoring and Reporting System; this will facilitate timely management of risks, as well as identification of emerging risks and corresponding management measures.

4.5. Stakeholder Engagement and Communications

Effective stakeholder engagement is essential for successful SAP implementation. Stakeholders may have direct or indirect responsibilities relating to SAP actions, they may be positively or negatively impacted by the SAP, may be potential supporters or champions, or may hold important local knowledge that is relevant to implementation.

The following initiatives will be employed to ensure effective stakeholder engagement and communication in support of SAP implementation:

- Detailed stakeholder analysis conducted as part of Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (ATS-TDA 2023)
- SAP implementation will be informed by updated stakeholder engagement and communications plan, to be jointly developed by the Regional Secretariat and Regional Coordinating Committee
- The use of Free, Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) principles
- Detailed Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) framework

4.6. SAP Monitoring and Evaluation

The following section outlines the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) approach to be followed during SAP implementation.

4.6.1. SAP Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) System

A SAP Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system has been developed to support the implementation of this SAP. The M&E system provides the structure, methodologies and workflows needed by the RCC to achieve the following M&E objectives:

- Track progress and performance of SAP workplan implementation,
- Measure project impacts, including addressing threats, improving environmental status and achieving social, economic and governance goals

- Provide ‘feedback’ in the form of data that can be used to support adaptive management.

The M&E Plan incorporates the following elements:

- M&E Framework and detailed plan
- Detailed descriptions on indicators, means of verification, risks and assumptions
- M&E institutional arrangements and enabling environment
- M&E workplan and timeline
- Detailed methodologies for monitoring/data collection and analysis at regional and national levels
- Standardised monitoring and reporting forms and templates
- Additional guidance on the use of M&E outputs
- Identifying data sources and data collection processes
- Gender-sensitive M&E approaches and tools

The M&E Plan will be reviewed and updated in line with the ToC and detailed results chains that will be developed for the SAP.

4.6.2. Programme Targets and Indicators

At the level of goal and objective, this SAP employs the following target and indicator types adapted from GEF International Waters guidance. These indicators will be used to measure the impact of SAP interventions within and across jurisdictions, for the life of the project, and in some cases (such as with Environmental Status Indicators) beyond end-of-project.

Process Indicators: *Programme outputs or milestones including institutional or legal reforms needed to activate collaborative action required to successfully reduce environmental stresses*

Threat Reduction Indicators: *Indicators that relate to the specific on-ground measures are being carried out to reduce environmental stressors.*

Environmental Status Indicators: *these identify changes that have occurred within the natural system or ecosystem as a result of the intervention. Such indicators may require a long time before change is realised.*

Socio-economic Indicators: *indicators that capture changes occurring within communities (at various levels, including individual, household, association or government area) as a result of the intervention*

The complete list of SAP targets is included as Annex 6.

4.7. Adaptive Management

Adaptive management is a systematic approach to deliberately incorporate learning within programme design and management to improve the effectiveness of interventions over time. Informed by the M&E system, adaptive management in the SAP context includes constantly

analysing and responding to ‘feedback’ from the system generated by data, reports, stakeholder consultation and other mechanisms – this feedback is analysed to learn how interventions are performing against set targets, what might be influencing this performance, and how expectations may be met or adjusted given changing conditions.

Adaptive management of the SAP will incorporate the following elements:

- SAP M&E System
- Risk assessment (Annex 7)
- Periodic performance evaluations by the RCC
- Annual implementation plans
- Stakeholder input through the RSWG

Key to adaptive management is the ability to alter the plan depending on this feedback – in some instances, priorities, objectives and targets may need to be re-evaluated or revised (either up or down), methodologies adapted to suit changing conditions, and timeframes adjusted to allow for unexpected delays, or assumptions reviewed. This is particularly important for a programme with a long-time horizon, such as this SAP.

In addition to annual reporting on implementation, programme evaluations are to be conducted every 2.5 years to assess programme impact, review assumptions, and refine programme priority activities and targets as necessary. Strategic reviews of the SAP will also be undertaken at 5 (mid-term) and 10 (terminal) intervals and may be requested at any time by the RCC. These reviews will focus on the strategic priorities of the SAP, assumptions, enabling conditions and corresponding priority actions to enable the SAP to respond to changing conditions.

Lastly, contained within the SAP plan are a number of technical assessments that will precipitate further decisions, particularly those regarding selection of priority sites or demonstration area, and further selection of future ecological targets (including selection of priority ETP groups, and area-based management targets). Based on these assessments, any subsequent decisions on the selection of further actions, sites and investments will be led by the RCC with technical inputs provided by the RSWGs as requested.



CHAPTER 5

ANNEXES



1. References and resources
2. SAP updating process
3. SAP contributors
4. SAP shared principles and approaches
5. SAP climate change impacts and responses
6. Summary of SAP targets
7. Risk assessment
8. Theory of Change

Annex 1 – References and resources

Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis and Strategic Action Programme (TDA-SAP)

[ATSEA-2 \(2023\) Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis](#)

[Theory of Change for the Arafura and Timor Seas Ecosystem Action Phase 2 \(ATSEA-2\) Project \(2021\)](#)

[Strategic Action Programme for the Arafura and Timor Seas, ATSEA Program \(2012\)](#)

ATS Atlas

[Arafura and Timor Seas Atlas 2023 \(ATSEA-2, 2023\)](#)

Climate change

[Assessing the Vulnerability of the Arafura and Timor Seas Region to Climate Change \(Johnson et al., 2021\)](#)

[Guide for Facilitators and Decision-Makers: Incorporating Regional Climate Change Results into local action planning \(Johnson et al., 2023\)](#)

Regional assessments generated by ATSEA-2:

[The Atlas of Arafura and Timor Seas \(ATSEA-2, 2021\)](#)

[Analysis of Threatened, Charismatic, and Migratory Species Distribution Around the Arafura and Timor Seas \(Fajariyanto et al., 2020\)](#)

[Regional Profile of Coastal and Marine Ecosystems in the ATS \(Hakim et al., 2020\)](#)

[Valuation of Ecosystem Services in the Arafura and Timor Seas Region \(Choesin et al., 2021\)](#)

[An Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management for Red Snapper in the Arafura and Timor Seas – Fishery Baselines \(Knuckey et al., 2021\)](#)

[Resilient Marine Protected Area Network Design for the Arafura and Timor Seas \(Fajariyanto et al., 2022\)](#)

[Marine and Land-Based Pollution Assessment in the Arafura and Timor Seas region \(Shin, 2021\)](#)

Country-specific baselines generated by ATSEA-2:

[ATSEA-2 Country Synthesis Report, Timor-Leste \(Fonseca et al., 2022\)](#)

[ATSEA-2 Country Synthesis Report, Indonesia \(Yonvitner et al., 2022\)](#)

[ATSEA-2 Country Synthesis Report, Papua New Guinea \(Mana and Mungkaje, 2022\)](#)

Component 1

[IMO 2017 Guidelines on the Implementation of MARPOL Annex 5](#)

Global Partnership for Marine Litter (GPML/UNEP)

[IMO 2017 Guidelines on the Implementation of MARPOL Annex 5](#)

[IMO Action Plan to Address Marine Plastic Litter from Ships \(Outcome 1\)](#)

[FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries \(1995\)](#)

[FAO Voluntary Guidelines on the Marking of Fishing Gear](#)

Global Partnership for Marine Litter (GPML/UNEP)

Global Ghost Gear Initiative

Relevant Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs)

Component 2

[International Convention on Civil Liability \(CLC\) for Oil Pollution Damage \(IMO\)](#)

[IOPC Funds Convention](#)

Component 3

[FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries
Regional Plan of Action-Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing](#)

Component 4

[Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals \(CMS\)](#)

[Convention on Biological Diversity \(CBD\) Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework](#)

National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAP):

[Australia NBSAP](#)

[Indonesia NBSAP](#)

[Papua New Guinea NBSAP](#)

[Timor-Leste NBSAP](#)

Other references

[Managing Risks Across UNDP Programming and Operations Guidance Note September 2019](#)

Annex 2 – SAP updating process

Table 3 – Key steps and timeline of SAP creation, 2021-2023

Date		Key steps taken
2021	Dec – Jun 2022	Data gathering and preparation of Country Synthesis Reports (CSRs)
2022	Apr-May	National Working Groups (NWGs) established to support preparation of CSRs and TDA and SAP revision
	Aug	Regional Working Group (RWG) and National Working Groups (NWGs) created to provide regional perspective in the TDA and SAP revision
	Sep-Oct	Issue identification and Causal Chain Analysis
	Nov	Endorsement of Priority Issues by RSC
	Dec	Completion of TDA draft
2023	Feb	Regional TDA-SAP Updating Workshop (Bali, Indonesia) held to validate draft TDA and initiate SAP revision process
	Mar	National SAP Strategic Thinking Workshops
	Apr	Online Regional Workshop (Consolidation of Strategic Thinking, initiation of Strategic Planning)
	May	National Strategic Planning Workshops
		Regional Strategic Planning Workshop
	Jun	Drafting of updated SAP
	Jul	RSC review and revision of draft
	Aug	Regional and national consultations on SAP draft
	Sep-Oct	Revision and preparation of final draft
	Nov	Final endorsement by RSC
	Dec	SAP Publication and dissemination

Data gathering and preparation of draft CSRs (Dec. 2021-July 2022) included the preparation of Country Synthesis Reports consolidating data and information on ecological, socio-economic and governance status, trends, issues and opportunities in the ATS region. CSRs were prepared with the support of national consultants, to serve as key references in identifying priority transboundary issues and updating the TDA.

National working groups (NWGs) and a regional working group (RWG) were established, with representation of various sectors and disciplines to determine priority transboundary issues, and to provide and facilitate regional and national inputs and perspectives to TDA/SAP updating.

Causal Chain Analyses (CCA) were conducted for identified issues, to establish causality for key issues and to inform the identification of leverage points.

Regional thematic assessments conducted by ATSEA-2 were also considered, including fisheries assessments, mapping of critical habitats and ecosystems, pollution assessments and a regional climate vulnerability assessment.

Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (2023 revision) were developed with the Regional Working Group during 2022-2023, and endorsed by the RSC in July 2023. The revised TDA identifies the key transboundary issues affecting the ATS, informing the core components of the updated ATS-SAP 2024-2033.

SAP Strategic Thinking around SAP priorities was facilitated through a series of national and regional workshops held between February and May of 2023 to identify key issues, align with national priorities and to begin to develop the framework for the updated SAP.

SAP Strategic Planning to develop the SAP targets and priority actions followed via a series of planning workshops held at national and regional levels

SAP endorsement resulted from a final round of consultations with ATSEA countries in August and September 2023, after which a final draft of the updated ATS-SAP (2024-2033) was presented to the RSC.

Annex 3 – SAP contributors

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Annex 4 – SAP shared principles and approaches

In implementing the SAP (and related initiatives including NAPs), ATSEA adopts the following principles and approaches:

Principle of Sovereignty

ATSEA recognises that under international law, all states may govern and control all activities and exert their sovereign rights within territories within their sovereignty, including territorial waters.

Precautionary Approach

ATSEA adopts the *Precautionary Approach* as espoused in the 1992 Rio Declaration, which states that “where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation” and the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD) which stipulates that “where there is a threat of significant reduction or loss of biological diversity, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to avoid or minimize such a threat.”

Principles of Fair and Equitable Benefit-sharing

United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) provides for the equitable sharing of financial benefits derived from activities in a defined area. And the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) provides for the fair and equitable sharing of benefits” arising from the utilization of genetic resources.

Principle of Equality and non-discrimination

ATSEA recognises international legal standards with relation to equality that aim to ensure that:

- women and girls are able to access and enjoy, equally with men and boys, their civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights;
- recognise that factors such as age, language, ethnicity, race, caste, culture, religion, disability, family and socio-economic status, and rural or urban background can create additional barriers to equality (including gender equality)

Principle of Participation and Inclusivity

ATSEA recognises that all people have the right to participate in and access information relating to the decision-making processes that affect their lives and well-being.

Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC)

Consistent with international human rights standards, ATSEA recognises the principle of FPIC that states that all peoples have the right to self-determination and have the right to freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.

Notification, consultation and negotiation

Consistent with international law, ATSEA recognises the rights of ATS member countries to prior notice, consultation and negotiation in cases where a proposed use of the shared water body (ATS) may cause harm to their rights and interests

Also embodied in the SAP design are integrated resource management approaches including;

- The ecosystem approach
- Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM)
- Integrated Coastal Management (ICM)

Annex 5 – Climate change impacts and SAP responses (by SAP component)

The following table outlines the various measures by which climate change impacts may be addressed by the SAP; specific priority actions from the SAP are listed in the ‘specific responses columns.

Climate Change Impacts	Specific Responses in SAP
Component 1 – Marine Plastic Pollution	
<p>Greenhouse gases (GHG) are emitted throughout the plastic life cycle. Estimates indicate that GHG emissions from plastics could reach about 13% of the entire remaining carbon budget by 2050</p> <p>Plastic in the oceans may interfere with the oceans capacity to absorb and sequester carbon dioxide</p> <p>Plastic pollution can alter habitats and natural processes, reducing ecosystems' adaptive capacity (with livelihood implications for those dependent on marine ecosystems)</p> <p>Rising water temperatures and acidification may contribute to the rate of degradation of marine plastics (resulting in ‘microplastics’ that can be ingested by marine organisms)</p> <p>Extreme events caused by climate change may contribute to higher frequency of lost or damaged fishing gears (ALDFG)</p>	<p>Actions to reduce production and use of plastics will reduce carbon footprint/GHG emissions (Priority Action 1.1.4)</p> <p>Actions to prevent plastics from reaching the marine environment will improve or maintain the ocean’s ability to sequester CO₂ and potentially slow down climate change and impacts on biodiversity (Priority Actions 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.4, 1.2.1)</p> <p>Integrate climate change measures into policies and planning (Priority Action 1.1.1)</p> <p>Development and implementation of source to sea/integrated /circular economy approaches, plans, programs (with CC consideration) - (Priority Action 1.1.2, 1.2.1)</p> <p>Data/monitoring systems (with CC-related info) (Priority Action 1.1.5)</p>
Component 2 – Oil Spills	
<p>Increasing severity of storms and extreme weather events may increase the likelihood of accidents or technical failures, such as oil spills from refineries, extraction/drilling rigs, or oil in transport. Responding to spills resulting from extreme weather/climate change events may also be complicated by these factors</p>	<p>Assess preparedness of oil facilities and infrastructure, and oil spill preparedness and response systems, to extreme weather events and other climate change impacts (Priority Action 2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.1.3, 2.1.4)</p> <p>Develop comprehensive risk assessments that consider climate change risks and identify infrastructure vulnerabilities in coastal and offshore regions (Priority Action 2.1.1, 2.1.2,)</p> <p>Integrate risks and vulnerabilities in oil spill contingency plans and operations (Priority Action 2.1.2, 2.1.3)</p>

	<p>Decision support tools to integrate the oil transport and weathering model within response planning (Priority Action 2.1.3, 2.1.4)</p> <p>Upgrading design thresholds of facilities to protect and relocate crucial infrastructure (Priority Action 2.1.3, 2.1.4)</p>
<p>Component 3 – Small-Scale IUU Fishing</p>	
<p>CCVA indicates that nearshore fisheries habitats including coral reefs and mangroves are most at risk from thermal stress. There is a high correlation between the spatial distribution of these most vulnerable fisheries habitats and the fisheries activities’ of coastal small-scale fishers.</p> <p>More frequent extreme weather events and rougher sea conditions will increase likelihood of damage to fishing boats and gear, port facilities and infrastructure, and may exacerbate safety-at-sea issues for fishers using small vessels</p> <p>Algal blooms and ciguatera fish poisoning are projected to increase with rising water temperatures, potentially creating issues for public health and marketability of product</p>	<p>Transboundary SSF-IUUF hotspot assessment considering impacts of climate change to SS fishers/fisheries (Priority Action 3.1.1)</p> <p>Development and implementation of CB-POAs incorporating actions to strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity of SSF to impacts of CC (Priority Action 3.1.2)</p> <p>Ongoing use of climate change vulnerability assessments (CCVA) at priority assessments to obtain high resolution information on vulnerability at species and ecosystem levels (Priority Action 3.1.1)</p>
<p>Component 4 – ETP Species & Critical Habitats</p>	
<p>Climate change may affect some ETP species populations negatively in one or more of several ways; <i>altered or degraded habitats or environmental conditions, reduced reproduction success, number of offspring, altered migration routes, altered foraging habitats and prey-predator relationships,</i></p> <p>Reduced ecosystem function and health at critical habitats (i.e. coral reefs, mangroves, and seagrass) due to environmental factors including (but not limited to): <i>altered oceanographic cycles, sea level rise, altered coastal/shoreline processes, altered ocean chemistry (including acidification), thermal stress, altered rainfall patterns</i></p>	<p>ETP species action plans shall be developed by considering climate change impacts (Priority Action 4.1.1, 4.1.3)</p> <p>New MPAs establishment (including MPA management plans) shall consider the impacts of climate change (Priority Action 4.2.1, 4.2.3)</p> <p>Other effective (area-based) conservation measures (OECMs) may be designated to protect environmental values such as critical habitats (Priority Action 4.2.1, 4.2.2)</p>

Annex 6 – SAP targets

Component	Objective	Process Target	Threat Reduction Target	Socio-economic target	Environmental status target
Component 1: Reducing marine and coastal plastic pollution including ALDFG	Operational objective 1.1: Prevent and reduce inputs of plastic pollutants from land-based sources	At least 1 x regional and 4 x national/sub-national new policies, laws, agreements related to marine plastic pollution (<i>may include national or sub-national government laws, policies, commitments, partnerships or other agreements including with private sector, civil society and/or communities</i>)	1,000-5,000 tonnes of plastic pollution in the marine environment is prevented through new on-ground pilot measures	At least 3 x new circular economy pilot programs created with local communities	
			At least 9 coastal communities engaged in reduction of plastic waste		
	Operational objective 1.2: Reduce inputs of Abandoned, Lost and Discarded Fishing Gear (ALDFG)	At least 1 x regional and 4 x national/sub-national new policies, laws, regulations, agreement, commitments related to ALDFG (<i>may include national or sub-national government laws, policies, commitments, partnerships or other agreements including with private sector, civil society and/or communities</i>)	At least 1,000 metric tons of ALDFG is prevented through recovery and recycling by local communities (<i>subject to findings of the proposed ALDFG-RAP</i>)	At least 9 coastal communities / fishing associations engaged in reduction of ALDFG waste At least 3 new pilot programs created with local communities to recover and recycle ALDFG waste	>10% reduction in fisheries (ALDFG) waste observed in the marine environment during routine monitoring
		Adoption of 1x Regional Action Plan			

		(RAP) to combat ALDFG			
Component 2: Preventing and responding to oil spills	Operational objective 2.1: Strengthen regional coordination and capacities on oil spill preparedness and response	Adoption of 1 x regional coordination mechanism and Framework Agreement for oil spill preparedness and response in the ATS			
Component 3: Reducing the incidence of small-scale IUU fishing in transboundary areas	Operational objective 3.1: Create effective agreements and incentives to improve management of small-scale fisheries operating illegally in transboundary areas	A new regional assessment of small-scale transboundary IUU fishing is completed for the ATS	25-50% reductions in illegal fishing at three identified IUU fishing hotspot sites <i>(subject to findings of the regional assessment of small-scale IUU)</i>	At least 3* small-scale fisheries secured through improved management and reduction of IUU fishing <i>(subject to findings of the regional assessment of small-scale IUU fishing)</i>	
		At least 3 new transboundary agreements (e.g., FIP, management plans or community-based programs) created at identified hotspot sites		At least 5,000 fisheries livelihood beneficiaries benefit from improved management, IUU fishing reduction and alternative livelihoods <i>(subject to findings of the regional assessment of small-scale IUU)</i>	
Component 4: Increase resilience of regional populations of endangered, threatened and protected (ETP) species and critical habitats	Operational objective 4.1: Enhance collaborative management of priority transboundary or migratory populations of ETP species	Delivery of regional priority actions in Sea Turtle RAP	At least 25% reduction in identified threats for prioritised ETP species <i>(dependent on species prioritisation, and subject to RAPs)</i>	Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) incorporated in management systems for at least one ETP species / species groups	Stable long-term trend in sea turtle nest counts / population census at selected ATS priority sites

		At least one new RAP developed for priority transboundary ETP species or species groups (other than sea turtles – already covered by ATS sea turtle RAP)	[mid-term: additional targets related to ETP species may be developed for new priority groups]		
	Operational objective 4.2: Build resilience of ATS critical habitats and ecosystems against climate change through effective area-based management	70,000km ² of new MPAs gazetted (20% MPA coverage for ATS, up from 2023 baseline of 263,000km ² , or 16% coverage)	Management effectiveness increases of at least 25% are observed in at least 25% of MPAs in the ATS MPA network	Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) incorporated in management systems for at least 3x sites	25-30% of ATS critical habitats and ecosystems under effective area-based protection
		10,000 km ² of new Other Effective (area-based) Conservation Measures (OECM) created			
		A new regional commitment to achieve 20-30% of ATS under effective area-based protection to contribute to 30x30 ambition, incorporating both MPAs + OECMs			

Annex 7 – SAP Risk Assessment: identification and possible mitigation measures

The following risk assessment has been conducted for the ATS region for the corresponding SAP implementation period 2024-2033. It identifies and assesses risks associated with the core SAP components, and with implementation of the SAP. The risk assessment may be reviewed at any time during implementation.

LEGEND:

Severity of Impact: 1 - limited, 2 - low, 3 - moderate, 4 - high, 5 - extreme

Likelihood: 1 – not likely 2 – low likelihood, 3 -moderately likely, 4 – highly likely, 5 - expected

Risk rating: Green: Very low to low risk

Yellow: Medium risk

Orange: High risk

Red: Very high to Extreme risk

Likelihood <i>What is the likelihood that the risk will happen?</i>	5-Expected	Medium	High	Very high	Extreme	Extreme
	4-Highly likely	Medium	Medium	High	Very high	Extreme
	3-Moderately likely	Low	Medium	Medium	High	Very high
	2-Low likelihood	Very low	Low	Medium	Medium	High
	1-Not likely	Very low	Very low	Low	Medium	Medium
		1-Limited	2-Low	3-Moderate	4-High	5-Extreme
Severity of Impact <i>How severe would the outcomes be if the risk occurred?</i>						

Project risk	Likelihood	Severity of Impact	Risk Rating	Mitigation
Social and Environmental				
Impacts of climate change in the ATS could undermine the sustainability of marine and coastal resource utilisation by adversely impacting biological processes underpinning provisioning, regulating and supporting ecosystem services	2	4	Medium	Conduct climate change vulnerability assessments and disseminate learnings to regional partners
There is a potential that gender-based and marginalised group discrimination may be replicated, especially regarding women's and marginalized group's participation in project design and implementation, as well as access to	3	3	Medium	Update GESI Action Plan for the updated SAP Ensure equal representation in ATS

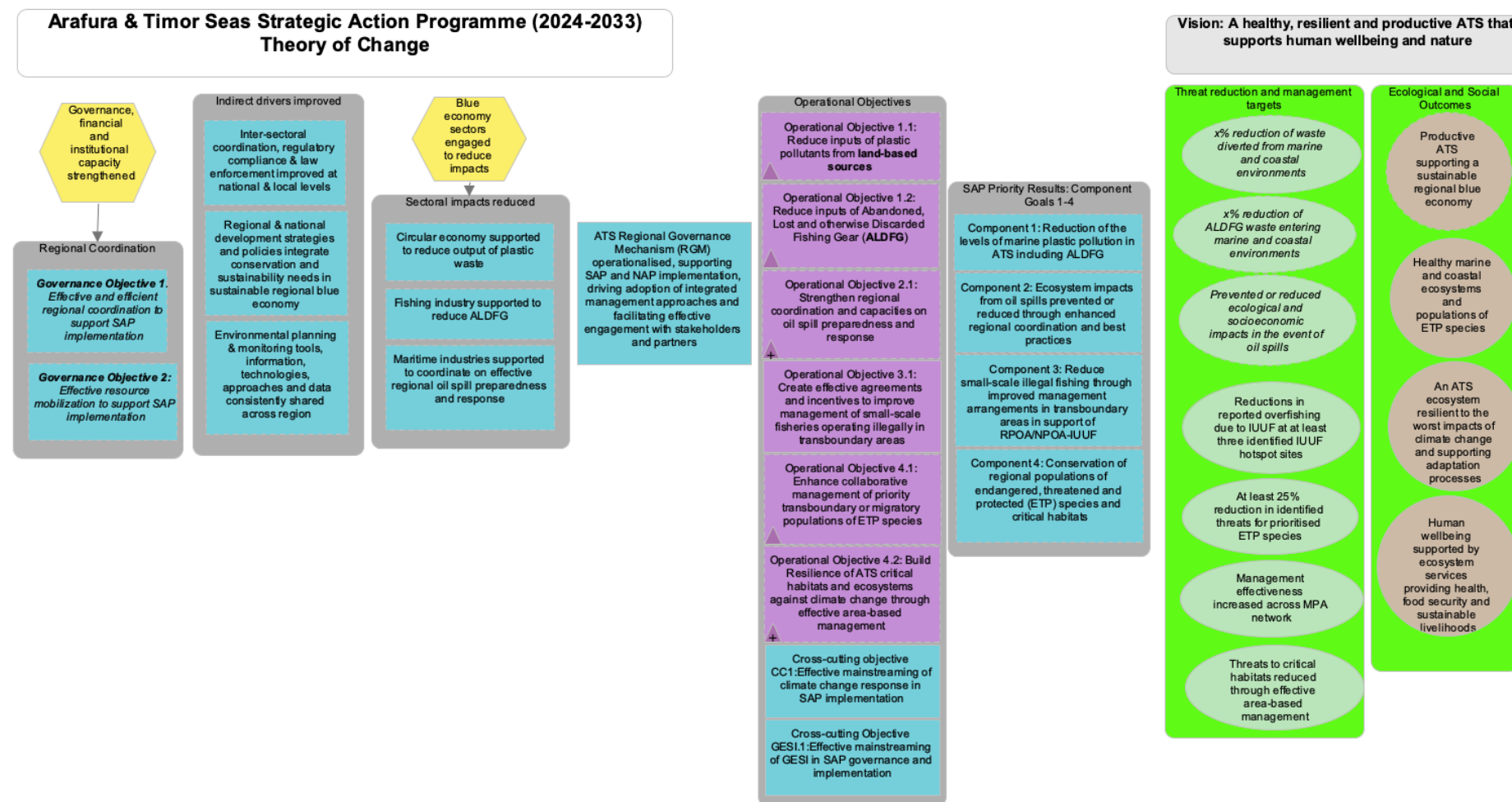
opportunities and benefits; and also, in decision making.				and SAP governance mechanism and structures Ensure GESI is adequately considered in Monitoring and Reporting framework
Some program activities have the capacity to impact on marine and coastal ecosystems and resources particularly in areas that include community-managed areas. This means that fishing/ fish/coastal resources harvesting is currently taking place and may be affected as a result of SAP interventions that promote sustainable resource management and practices.	3	3	Medium	Apply the EAFM approach to fisheries management, promote rights-based fisheries management approaches, promote ongoing compliance with fisheries law, supported by effective and appropriate outreach and communication and livelihood programs
SAP activities involving fisheries, introducing alternative livelihoods and nutrition have the potential to impact on the rights, lands, livelihoods and traditional knowledge of Indigenous Peoples and Ethnic Minorities (e.g. loss of assets or access to resources; access restriction)	3	3	Medium	Conduct participatory surveys to understand local communities' needs and rights and potential impacts of program activities Continue to promote rights-based management and EAFM and employ GESI processes
Financial				
Financial sustainability of program activities might be threatened by inadequate allocation of funding	4	3	High	Continue to coordinate with countries and partners to deliver co-financing commitments Develop a financial plan to accompany SAP and identify funding needs, sources and mechanisms required for successful SAP implementation
Operational				
If coordination by national and site mobilisers is inadequate, performance of project activities will be low	2	2	Low	Post site mobilisers at site, hire government liaison consultants to facilitate regular communication with local government
Potential occupational health and safety (OHS) risks due to physical hazards related to field data collection & monitoring not only to the	2	2	Low	Develop and employ appropriate safety protocols and

potential risk faced by SAP implementers team in visiting remote villages with limited healthcare facilities (i.e., underwater monitoring, Covid related risks).				Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to manage risks associated with fieldwork Minimise risk by coordinating closely with local authorities in SAP implementation
Resource users including communities and private sector enterprises might be reluctant to collaborate with the project.	3	2	Medium	Conduct participatory surveys to understand local communities' needs and rights and potential impacts of program activities Continue to promote rights-based management and EAFM and employ GESI processes to ensure equitable distribution of benefits
Organisational				
Capacity to support management changes proposed by the SAP might be insufficient, e.g. with regard to institutional and administrative support, and monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) and enforcement.	3	2	Medium	Conduct capacity needs assessments and design/deliver appropriate capacity building programs to support SAP implementation
Political				
Unclear mandates or conflicts among resource users, different sectors of governmental units, national and subnational stakeholders lead to delays in SAP implementation.	4	2	Medium	Establish the Regional Governance Mechanism (RGM) with appropriate coordination structures to clarify mandate, manage coordination tasks and manage potential sectoral conflict
Change in key policy and/or decision makers or other events beyond the control of the project might lead to changes in policies and/or support for the project.	4	2	Medium	Facilitate periodic discussion with National Coordinating Committees (NCCs) to maintain national engagement and keep abreast of electoral processes, and changes in government or policy.
Enabling decisions required for implementation of some of the key project activities might be delayed due to inefficiencies, capacity challenges and changing levels of interest or ownership by national and/or local government units.	4	2	Medium	Facilitate periodic discussion with National Coordinating Committees (NCCs) to maintain national engagement and strong sense of

				ownership for SAP duration Release regular updates and communications to engage national stakeholders regularly
Littoral countries might not reach agreement on financing strategy.	4	2	Medium	Continue to espouse the value proposition and benefits of ATS coordinated regional action, and associated co-benefits
Regulatory				
Amendments or changes in government policies may affect or hamper delivery of commitments to the program	3	4	High	Facilitate periodic discussion with National Coordinating Committees (NCCs) to maintain national engagement and keep abreast of changes in government policy and agree on adaptive measures.

Annex 8 – SAP Theory of Change (ToC)

The following is a high-level summary of SAP Theory of Change. The SAP ToC and its underlying assumptions will be subject to review following endorsement, and will include development of detailed results chains, which can in turn inform implementation planning.





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