



GEF/UNDP/ASEAN PROJECT ON REDUCING POLLUTION AND PRESERVING ENVIRONMENTAL FLOWS IN THE EAST ASIAN SEAS THROUGH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INTEGRATED RIVER BASIN MANAGEMENT (IRBM) IN ASEAN COUNTRIES

Proceedings of the Second Regional Steering Committee Meeting

2 July 2024
Siem Reap, Cambodia
and via Zoom



APPROVAL SIGNATURES



Mr. Oudomsack Philavong
Chair

Date 26 AUG 2024

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Co-Chair

23-Aug-2024
Date _____



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Executive Summary

The Second Regional Steering Committee (RSC) meeting of the **GEF/UNDP/ASEAN Project on Reducing Pollution and Preserving Environmental Flows in the East Asian Seas through the Implementation of Integrated River Basin Management (IRBM) in ASEAN Countries** was organized back-to-back with the 24th Meeting of the ASEAN Working Group on Water Resources Management (AWGWRM) on 2 July 2024 through a hybrid format, i.e., in-person at Bayon Era Hotel in Siem Reap, Cambodia and online via Zoom.

Hosted by the Royal Government of Cambodia through the Ministry of Environment (MOE), the meeting was co-chaired by Mr. Oudomsack Philavong, Chair of the ASEAN Working Group on Water Resources Management (AWGWRM) and Mr. Gerd Trogemann, Manager of United Nations Development Programme-Bangkok Regional Hub of Asia and the Pacific (UNDP-BRH). The meeting was attended by the National Focal Points (NFPs) of the AWGWRM from the ten (10) ASEAN Member States (AMS), i.e., Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam, the ASEAN Secretariat (ASEC), the East Asian Seas Executive Committee (EAS EC) and UNDP-BRH. The Regional Project Management Unit (RPMU), hosted by PEMSEA Resource Facility (PRF) and MOE Cambodia served as Secretariat to the RSC meeting.

The Second RSC meeting reviewed the status of decisions and recommendations from the Ad-hoc RSC meeting held in November 2023; noted the progress made by the six (6) AMS and regional level in project implementation including the challenges and strategies to address the challenges; introduced the project risks and emphasized the impacts of delayed project implementation; provided information on the preparation of the 2024 Project Implementation Report and the support required from the AMS, and approved the re-profiled 2024 work plan and budget and the proposed 2025 work plan and budget, subject for further adjustments based on the progress of implementation by end of 2024. The meeting also noted that the 3rd RSC meeting will be convened alongside the 25th AWGWRM meeting, details on the host government and schedule of which will be discussed at the Closed Session of the 24th AWGWRM meeting and communicated to UNDP and PRF thereafter .

The RSC noted the following recommendations and decision from the meeting:

- RPMU to continue coordinating and providing support to the six AMS to facilitate project approval, subject to national processes in Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines and Vietnam and accelerate project implementation in Cambodia, Lao PDR and the Philippines.

- AMS to identify additional steps to increase the level of financial delivery as the project is approaching its mid-point in June 2025 where the expected financial delivery is 50 percent of the total project budget.
- Inclusion of the project risks and social and environmental safeguards (SES) in the agenda of the succeeding RSC meetings as risk management is a critical component of the project cycle that contributes to the overall success in project implementation.
- RPMU to provide the budget breakdown for the 2024 reprofiled budget including the 2025 budget to the AMS with clarification that the 2025 workplan and budget was developed with the expectation that the planned activities for 2024 would have been completed and the activities lined up for 2025 are based on the identified activities under Year 3 in the Project Document.
- Extend support to the non-participating AMS to participate in regional activities, i.e., regional training, learning exchanges, forums and conferences and other regional events, subject to further consultations with UNDP in consideration of budget availability from the regional component.
- Involvement of the AWGWRM in the consultation process for the SORB reporting prior to the publication of the SORB Guidebook and reports and their launching during the IRBM Forum of the 2024 East Asian Seas Congress in November 2024. The launching primarily aims to introduce the SORB reporting system and promote its application across the 10 AMS. RPMU to provide available SORB documents to AWGWRM and ASEC for review.
- Adoption of the re-profiled 2024 work plan and budget and the proposed 2025 work plan and budget, as presented, with the 2025 work plan and budget still subject to further adjustments based on the level of project implementation in 2024.
- Convening of the 3rd RSC meeting and the 25th AWGWRM meeting will follow the same arrangements as the 2nd RSC meeting. The decision and recommendation on the hosting of the 25th AWGWRM Meeting, which will be discussed during the Closed Session of the 24th AWGWRM Meeting, will be communicated to UNDP and PRF.

Introduction

- i. The Second Regional Steering Committee (RSC) Meeting of the GEF/UNDP/ASEAN Project on Reducing Pollution and Preserving Environmental Flows in the East Asian Seas through the Implementation of Integrated River Basin Management in ASEAN Countries was organized back-to-back with the 24th Meeting of the ASEAN Working Group on Water Resources Management (AWGWRM) on July 2, 2024 through a hybrid format, i.e., in-person at Bayon Era Hotel in Siem Reap, Cambodia and online via Zoom.
- ii. The RSC meeting was hosted by the Royal Government of Cambodia through the Ministry of Environment (MOE) and attended by the Chair of the ASEAN Working Group on Water Resources Management (AWGWRM), representatives from the National Focal Points (NFPs) of the AWGWRM from the ten (10) ASEAN Member States (i.e., Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam), the East Asian Seas Executive Committee (EAS EC), the ASEAN Secretariat (ASEC) and UNDP Bangkok Regional Hub in Asia and the Pacific (UNDP-BRH).
- iii. The RSC meeting was co-chaired by Mr. Oudomsack Philavong, Chair of the AWGWRM and Mr. Gerd Trogemann, Manager, Regional Programme and Global Policy Network, UNDP-BRH. The RPMU and MOE Cambodia served as Secretariat to the RSC meeting.
- iv. The list of participants is given in **Appendix A**.

Opening of the Meeting

- i. On behalf of the Government of Cambodia, Mr. Roath Sith, Deputy Director General of the Directorate of Environmental Protection, MOE warmly welcomed the participants to the 2nd RSC meeting in Siem Reap, Cambodia, home of the country's natural and cultural heritage site. Mr. Roath highlighted the significance of the event in showcasing the achievements, and discussing the challenges and future directions of project implementation. He added that the IRBM Project exemplifies the robust collaboration among key stakeholders in safeguarding the environment and in advancing sustainable development in the ASEAN region. In line with the objectives of the project, Mr. Roath cited the government's priorities and actions on environmental protection, biodiversity conservation, climate change and sustainable development, which are elaborated

in MOE's Strategic Framework for 2023-2028. He added that the Strategic Framework includes programs on clean air, water and land, biodiversity and ecosystem conservation, and a target of achieving 60 percent of forest protection by 2050. Moreover, Mr. Roath indicated that MOE has recently enacted the Environmental and Natural Resources Code, a comprehensive legislation that strengthens environmental protection while supporting sustainable economic development in Cambodia. Mr. Roath concluded his message by wishing the 2nd RSC meeting to have productive and fruitful outcome.

- ii. On behalf of the AWGWRM, Mr. Oudomsack Philavong, Chair of the AWGWRM and Director General of the Department of Water Resources, Lao PDR, welcomed the participants to the 2nd RSC meeting. Mr. Philavong expressed his appreciation to the Government of Cambodia, through MOE, for hosting and co-organizing the meeting with UNDP, ASEC and PRF. He elaborated on the key agenda items for discussion and encouraged the members to actively contribute in the discussions, particularly in identifying actions to support project implementation. He concluded by thanking the RSC members, both online and in person, for their participation to the meeting.
- iii. Mr. Gerd Trogemann, Manager, Regional Programme and Global Policy Network of UNDP-BRH for Asia and the Pacific, who joined the meeting virtually, highlighted that the 2024 SDG Report indicated that only about 17 percent of all SDG targets are on-track and with only six (6) years until 2030, current progress falls very far short of what is required to meet the SDGs. Mr. Trogemann underscored the importance of the IRBM Project in contributing to achieving the SDG targets pertaining to water. He cited that the project is on its second year and will be reaching the mid-point of implementation in June 2025 where a full mid-term review of the project will be undertaken. Mr. Trogemann noted that while some progress has been made, the project is hampered by relatively slow overall delivery and uneven implementation levels in participating countries among other implementation challenges. He urged the RSC to provide a collective and effective guidance and support in finding ways of addressing the challenges in project implementation. Finally, he sincerely thanked the AWGWRM and ASEC for taking the time to participate in the meeting and the RPMU for the efficient support in co-organizing the meeting with MOE.

1. Adoption of Meeting Agenda

- 1.1 The Meeting adopted the agenda, as presented (**Appendix B**).
- 1.2 The RSC meeting documents, PowerPoint presentations and photos can be accessed at [2nd RSC](#).

2. Matters Arising from the Ad-Hoc RSC Meeting

2.1 Ms. Daisy Padayao, IRBM Project Technical Officer, presented the key decisions and recommendations from the Ad-hoc RSC meeting held on 24 November 2023 as follows:

2.2 Implementation Progress

- The RSC appreciated the efforts of the six AMS in pursuing the approval of the project following their respective domestic processes with support from the RPMU and the initiation of project activities in Cambodia, Lao PDR and the Philippines, and encouraged Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines and Vietnam to expedite the approval process.
- **Status:** Implementation progress at the regional, national and river basin levels are reported under Agenda Item 3.0 of the 2nd RSC.

2.3 Capacity building and knowledge management

- The RSC recommended the engagement of non-participating AMS in key events and knowledge management activities of the project.
- **Status:** The non-participating AMS have been, and will be, invited in key regional events (e.g., RSC meetings, Regional Workshop on State of River Basin, Regional Workshop on Gender Equality and Social Inclusion, etc.) and are included in the communications and dissemination of the project's knowledge products.

2.4 Hosting of the 2nd RSC and 24th AWGWRM meetings

- The RSC recommended the AWGWRM NFP of Cambodia to communicate the decision of MOE Cambodia on the hosting of the 2nd RSC and 24th AWGWRM meetings to the ASEC, PRF and UNDP.
- **Status:** The RPMU has provided the necessary technical and financial support for the conduct of the back-to-back meetings.

2.5 Preparation and dissemination of the Ad-hoc RSC proceedings

- The RSC instructed the RPMU to record and share the key decision points in the minutes of the meeting for their review and approval.
- **Status:** The proceedings of the Ad-hoc RSC meeting have been prepared, signed by the co-chairs of the RSC and disseminated to the members of the RSC on 24 December 2023.

2.6 The meeting was informed that additional details on the above matters will be covered in the progress reports of the 6 AMS.

3. Project Implementation Progress, Key Challenges and Strategies to Address the Challenges

3.1 The six participating AMS were called in alphabetical order, followed by the RPMU, to present the progress made in project implementation since the Ad-hoc RSC in November 2023, including the challenges encountered and strategies to address the challenges. On behalf of their respective countries and RPMU, the following delivered the presentations:

- **Cambodia:** Mr. Phin Rady, Director, Department of Water Quality Management, Ministry of Environment;
- **Indonesia:** Ms. Aulia Rahmawati, Junior Environmental Impact Officer, Directorate General of Environmental Pollution and Degradation Control, Ministry of Environment and Forestry;
- **Lao PDR:** Mr. Thanongxay Douangnoulak, Director, Division of Water Resources Assessment, Department of Water Resources, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment;
- **Malaysia:** Dato' Rozman Mohamad, Director, Division of Water Resources Management and Hydrology, Department of Irrigation and Drainage;
- **Philippines:** Atty. Ricky A. Arzadon, Executive Director, National Water Resources Board;
- **Vietnam:** Ms. Tran Thi Le Anh, Senior Officer, Pollution Control Department, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment,
- **RPMU:** Ms. Nancy Bermas, Regional Project Manager, PEMSEA Resource Facility.

3.2 Below are the highlights from the presentations:

3.3 Cambodia

- **Progress:**
 - Regional level: Participated in online Ad-Hoc RSC Meeting in November 2023 and Regional Workshop on State of River Basin Reporting (SORB) in April 2024 in Manila, Philippines.
 - National level: Organized the National Inception Workshop in June 2023 and Orientation Workshop on IRBM and ICM and SORB reporting in November 2023 in Kampot Province involving national and local stakeholders.
 - Coordinating mechanism: Established the Inter-Ministerial Working Group (IWG) to oversee and guide project implementation through Decision No. 1652/0424 SSR MoE/GDEP issued by the Ministry of Environment on April 4, 2024.
 - State of River Basin Reporting: Initiated the development of SORB report of Kampong Bay River Basin.
 - Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI): Conducted GESI survey involving local stakeholders and communities in Kampong Bay River Basin in February 2024.
- **Challenges:**
 - Capacity building: The project involves representatives from different national and local government agencies who may have limited capacity and thus, should be considered in future capacity building activities.
 - Project oversight and coordination: While the IWG has been established, meeting to introduce the project and discuss the work plan for project implementation is yet to be conducted. Coordination for the IWG is also a challenge due to varying institutional procedures among the member agencies.
- **Ways Forward:**
 - Organize the 1st Meeting of IWG to discuss the roles and responsibilities and plans for 2024-2025.
 - Conduct consultation meetings with relevant Ministries and Kampot Province to discuss the data/information requirements for the SORB.

3.4 Indonesia

- **Progress:**
 - Regional level: Participated in the online Ad-Hoc RSC Meeting in November 2023 and Regional Workshop in SORB in April 2024 in Manila, Philippines.

- River basin level:
 - ◇ State of River Basin Reporting: Workshops conducted on protection and management of water quality for Ciliwung River watershed and data and information management on May 7 and May 22, 2024, respectively, involving relevant local government agencies in Bogor Regency, Depok City and West Java Province.
 - ◇ IRBM Pilot Project: Initial consultations conducted for the identification of pilot project site location in Depok City traditional market for the implementation of food waste management; identification of potential Consultant for the conduct of baseline assessment and feasibility study and clarifying the administrative arrangements concerning land utilization for the implementation of the project.
 - ◇ Capacity development: Initial consultations conducted with IPB University (Bogor Agricultural University) for the development of SORB report of Ciliwung River Basin and for its possible designation as IRBM Learning Center for capacity development support.
- **Challenges:**
 - Delay in project start-up: Project is still undergoing internal review and approval process of MOEF.
 - SORB reporting: Data availability and data collection process involving different institutions for the SORB report preparation.
 - Procurement process: Lengthy procurement process for the required consultancy services for the implementation of the IRBM pilot project in Depok City.
- **Ways Forward:**
 - Facilitate project approval and signing of MOA between DWPC/MOEF and PEMSEA; initiation of project implementation is targeted by 3rd quarter of 2024.
 - Engagement of IPB University in SORB report preparation for Ciliwung River.
 - RPMU to handle the procurement of Consultants for the IRBM pilot project development and implementation.

3.5 Lao PDR

- **Progress:**
 - Regional level: Participated in the online Ad-Hoc RSC Meeting in November 2023 and Regional Workshop on State of River Basin Reporting in April 2024 in Manila, Philippines.
 - National level: High-level Policy Forum on Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM); First Meeting of the Project Steering Committee and

Training on IWRM and IRBM conducted in December 2023 in Oudomxay Province and Luang Prabang City, respectively.

- River Basin Level: Initiated the development of SORB report of Nam Tha River Basin (NTRB); reviewed the NTRB Action Plan 2021-2025 for potential IRBM pilot projects; conducted GESI survey at the provincial, district and village levels in NTRB;
- Coordinating mechanism: Project Steering Committees (PSCs) at the national and provincial levels in the three provinces spanning NTRB (i.e., Bokeo, Luang Namtha and Oudomxay) and Technical Working Groups established.
- Capacity development: National University of Laos designated as IRBM Learning Center and member of the PEMSEA Network of Learning Center.
- **Challenges:**
 - Geographic coverage: The NTRB covers a large area comprising 3 provinces and 11 districts, hence, is logistically difficult for the Project Team to travel to all districts.
 - Financial management: Complying with the financial management requirements of the Ministry of Finance (MOF) delays project implementation.
- **Ways Forward:**
 - Implement capacity building activities for the Project Teams at provincial and district levels including promotion of community involvement in project implementation.
 - DWR will continue to work closely with MOF with support from the RPMU for a more efficient financial management.

3.6 Malaysia

- **Progress:**
 - Regional level: Participated in the online Ad-Hoc RSC Meeting in November 2023 and Regional Workshop on State of River Basin Reporting in April 2024 in Manila, Philippines.
 - National level: Internal consultation meetings conducted with the Ministry of Natural Resources, Environment and Climate Change and the Department of Irrigation and Drainage (DID) and involving UNDP BRH, UNDP Malaysia and RPMU to discuss strategies in facilitating project approval and fund management arrangements, and the proposed expansion of river basin coverage to include two additional river basins in consideration of the current IRBM programs of DID.

- River basin level: Consultation meetings conducted with the State Water Authority Board of Kedah, Pulau Pinang and Perlis and 3 DID State to discuss the scope and implementing arrangements for the project.
- **Challenges:**
 - Changes in leadership resulting from the re-organization of the Ministry of Natural Resources, Environment and Climate; the Department of Irrigation and Drainage has been assigned to the newly created Ministry of Energy Transition and Water Transformation requiring re-negotiation and briefings on the project.
 - Implementation can commence only upon the issuance of Ministerial Memorandum, which is a requirement for foreign-funded projects in Malaysia.
- **Ways Forward:**
 - Targeted timeline of project approval through the issuance of Ministerial Memorandum: September 2024; recruitment of National Coordinator, facilitating the SORB reporting using completed studies and available data and establishment of Project Team: October 2024, and conduct of National Inception Workshop: November 2024.

3.7 Philippines

- **Progress:**
 - Regional level: Participated in the online Ad-Hoc RSC Meeting in November 2023 and Regional Workshop on State of River Basin Reporting in April 2024 in Manila, Philippines.
 - Coordinating mechanisms: Existing government-mandated mechanisms agreed to serve as coordinating mechanisms for the project in Imus Ylang Ylang River (i.e., Governing Board of Imus-Ylang Ylang-Rio Grande Rivers Water Quality Management Area) and Pasac Guagua Watershed (i.e., Sub-Committee on Environment under the Sectoral Committee on Economic Development of Regional Development Council Region 3)
 - State of River Basin Reporting: Initiated the development of SORB report for the 2 river basins
 - Networking and knowledge management: Utilized various platforms to raise the visibility of the project (e.g., Cavite Water and Solid Waste Summit in November 2023) and promoted networking with local partners and stakeholders
 - Gender Equality and Social Inclusion: GESI surveys conducted in the 2 river basins involving local stakeholders and communities.

- **Challenge:**
 - Delay in the re-issuance of Special Presidential Authority (SPA) from the Office of the President.
- **Ways Forward:**
 - Endorsement of the remaining co-financing commitments to the Department of Finance to facilitate SPA re-issuance in the 2nd semester of 2024 and MOA signing with DENR.
 - Conduct of National Stakeholder Workshop following SPA issuance
 - Conduct of Inception workshops for SORB reporting in the two river basins and facilitating the completion of the SORB reports.
 - Publication and dissemination of profile stories of Imus-Ylang Ylang River Basin and Pasac Guagua Watershed.
 - Identification and confirmation of pilot IRBM project in Pasac Guagua Watershed.

3.8 Vietnam

- **Progress:**
 - Regional level: Participated in the online Ad-Hoc RSC Meeting in November 2023 and Regional Workshop on State of River Basin Reporting in April 2024 in Manila, Philippines.
 - National and river basin levels: Prime Minister's Decision on the implementation policy for the IRBM project issued on 25 December 2023 (SO: 10053/VPCP-QHQT); series of consultations conducted with the Ministry of Planning, Finance and other relevant ministries, the People's Committees of Danang City and Quang Nam Province, including internal coordination with International Cooperation, Finance and Planning Departments of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment.
- **Challenges:**
 - Project implementation will commence only upon MONRE's approval of the Project Document for technical assistance in line with the Prime Minister's Decision.
- **Ways Forward:**
 - Upon MONRE's approval, activities for the remaining two quarters of 2024 will focus on the conduct of National Inception Workshop; establishment of coordinating mechanism for project implementation; initiation of SORB reporting for Vu Gia – Thu Bon River and confirming the pilot site and priority issue in Danang and Quang Nam for the development of IRBM pilot project.

3.9 Regional level

- **Progress:**
 - State of River Basin Reporting: RPMU facilitated the completion of the SORB Guidebook and reporting template based on the technical review of governance and management indicators; organized the Regional SORB workshop involving the six participating AMS and provided technical and administrative support to Cambodia, Lao PDR and the Philippines for the preparation of SORB reports in four river basins.
 - IRBM Pilot Projects: RPMU assisted in the establishment of governance mechanisms at national and river basin levels in Cambodia, Lao PDR and the Philippines and facilitated the confirmation of priority river basins, hotspot locations and identification of potential IRBM pilot project in the three AMS.
 - Capacity development and knowledge management: Developed training programs and materials for use in regional, national and river basin level trainings; facilitated the designation of IRBM learning center; raised the project's visibility by regular posting of regional, national and river basin level activities in various social media platforms; published and disseminated IRBM Project Newsletters and river basin profiles of Kampong Bay and Nam Tha River Basin and established the project's knowledge platforms, the IRBM Project microsite and e-portal.
 - Monitoring and evaluation and project management: RPMU facilitated compliance of the project to GEF and UNDP's monitoring, evaluation and reporting requirements through submission of quarterly financial and progress reports and monitoring of gender and project risks.
- **Challenges:**
 - Overall project progress is impeded by the lengthy government approval processes for donor/foreign-funded projects in the AMS; changes in administration and leadership at national and local levels; institutional re-organization; procurement procedures, and time lag between project preparation to implementation resulting to adjustments in project activities. The delay in implementation has resulted to low fund utilization.
- **Early lessons learned:**
 - Timing matters: Government approval processes vary across the six AMS; change in administration may result to shifts in policies and priorities; familiarization with government administrative processes, procedures and responsibilities is helpful as they can impact the timeliness of actions required to facilitate implementation.
 - Scheduling project milestones: Project workplan needs to factor in adequate time to complete the government's review and approval process; procurement processes can be time consuming which may impact the 80 percent fund utilization target per quarter.

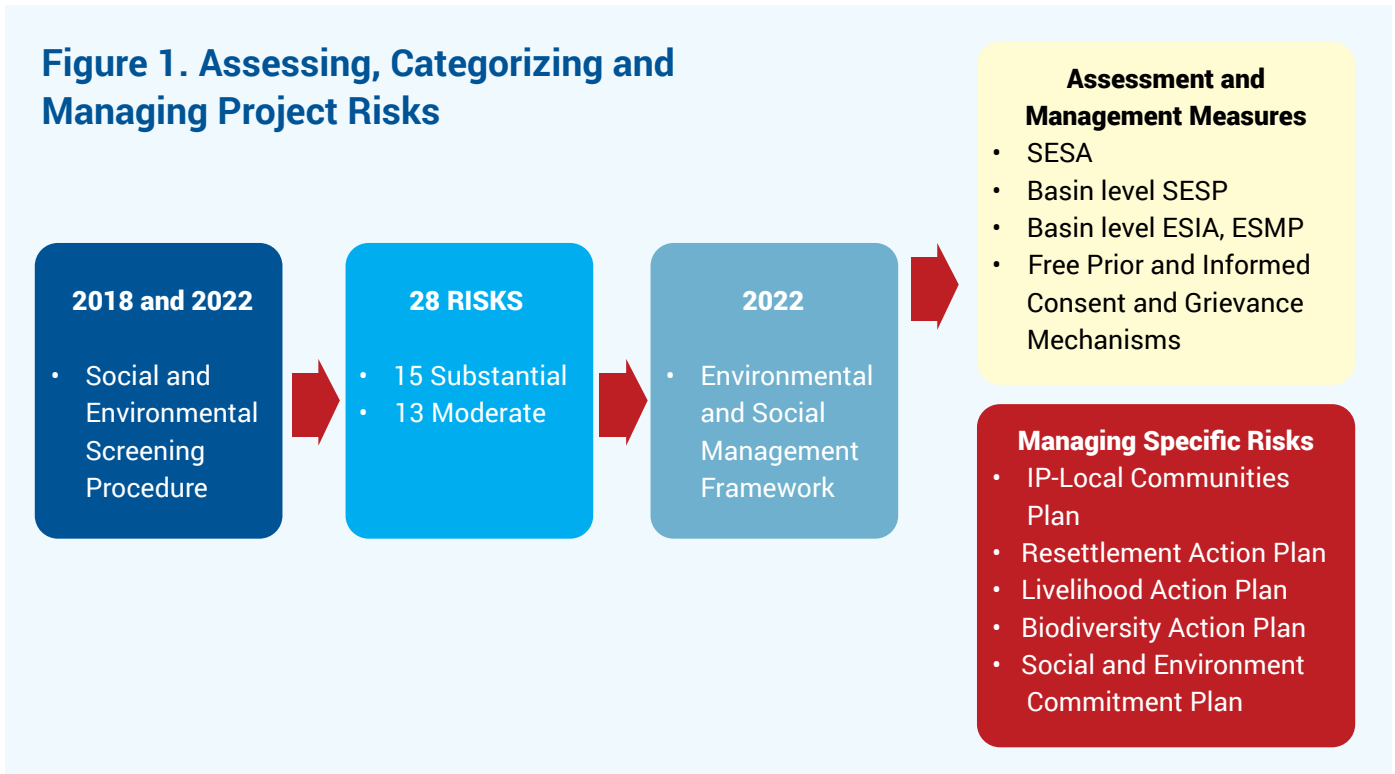
- Stakeholder engagement: Keeping the stakeholders informed and engaging them in the early stages of project implementation promotes ownership and appreciation of their role and contribution in delivering the outputs.
- Gender mainstreaming: The increasing level of awareness on gender concerns among the AMS facilitates gender mainstreaming into the project activities.
- Coordinating mechanisms: Can take many forms (Cambodia, Lao PDR and Philippines examples) but perform similar functions and compositions (multi-stakeholder/multi-sector representation; inter-agency, inter-ministerial); building on existing government mandated mechanisms facilitates institutionalization into the government process.
- State of River Basin Reporting: River basin reporting in the ASEAN region points to the need for an indicator-based, standardized, scalable and participatory reporting system that would allow integration across river basins.
- Shared responsibility: Familiarity with the project management requirements of GEF and UNDP facilitates sharing of responsibility and undertaking activities as a joint endeavor among the AMS and RPMU.
- **Way Forward:**
 - Identify adaptive management measures to address the delay in project implementation in coordination with the six AMS.

3.10 Discussion Highlights

- The RSC collectively noted the following:
 - Progress made at the regional level and the varying levels of implementation in the six AMS. The RSC expressed appreciation to the RPMU for closely coordinating and providing support to the six AMS and the significant efforts made by the six AMS in project implementation and in facilitating project approval in line with the national government processes.
 - The project is in its second year of implementation and approaching its mid-point in June 2025 where the expected financial delivery is 50 percent of the total project budget. The participating AMS need to accelerate project implementation to complete the planned activities and achieve the targeted level of financial delivery for 2024 and 2025 in line with the approved 2024 and 2025 workplan and budget.
 - The procurement process for goods and services is guided and is compliant with UNDP and PRF's procurement policies and procedures.
 - Intervention from Dr. Keita Furukawa of EAS EC, on inclusivity, community and stakeholder engagement in project implementation, which were aptly covered in the presentations. The RSC also noted Dr. Furukawa's recommendation to initiate consultations with local stakeholders through conduct of briefings and orientations to establish relationship while the project is undergoing government's review and approval process.

4. Review of Project Risks and Mitigating Measures

4.1 Ms. Nancy Bermas outlined the process of identifying, assessing, categorizing and managing the project risks, as shown in Figure 1, based on UNDP’s Social and Environmental Safeguards (SES) Policy of 2021.



- The presentation primarily conveyed the following points, to inform the RSC of the necessary actions in addressing the project risks:
 - A Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (SESP) which was applied in 2018 and 2022 identified 28 risks where 15 and 13 risks were categorized as substantial and moderate, respectively.
 - An Environment and Social Management Framework (ESMF) was developed based on the results of the SESP, which elaborated on the actions to be taken, the roles and responsibilities in managing the risks, the required capacity building measures and plan to implement the framework.
 - Majority of the risks identified fall under Component 2 and since the nature and exact locations of the IRBM pilot projects are yet to be confirmed and

three out of the six AMS have not fully started project implementation, the identified project risks cannot be fully assessed and need validation in consideration of emerging concerns and developments at the seven river basins.

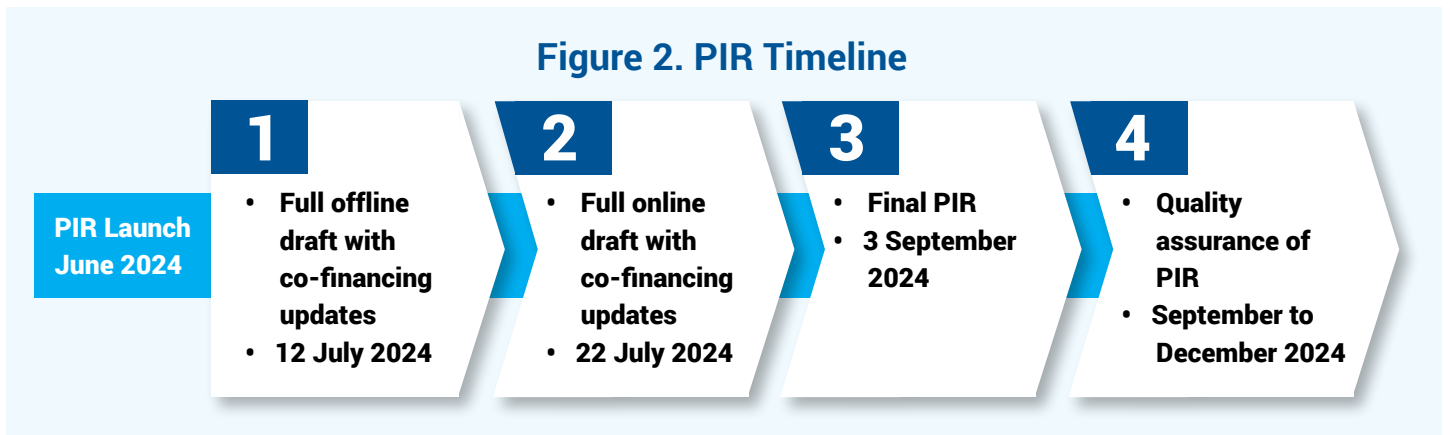
- Only three of the identified risks related to delay in project start up and implementation can be addressed at this stage.
- Ongoing recruitment of a regional SES Specialist to review the ESMF, conduct project-level SESA and provide guidance in the conduct of basin-level ESIA and development of ESMP in response to the identified risks under the three project components.

4.2 Discussion Highlights

- UNDP appreciated the inclusion of the project risks and SES in the agenda of the RSC meeting. In particular, the importance of risk management in any project that UNDP is managing regardless of location and focus and as a critical component of the project cycle was stressed.
- The RSC noted the intervention from Dr. Keita Furukawa of EAS EC, which elaborated on the need to apply adaptive management approaches as the project is being implemented following the Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle. Moreover, while there are no substantial environmental risks that have been identified, the status of the natural environment must always be taken into consideration and must be included in regular environmental monitoring activities.
- It was noted that the SES is not about avoiding risks but when risks exist, ways to mitigate, minimize and managing them are necessary to be put in place to allow the project to move forward.

5. Project Implementation Report

- 5.1 As per GEF's monitoring policy, Ms. Nancy Bermas introduced the process of preparation of the Project Implementation Report (PIR), a requirement for GEF projects that have completed one (1) year of implementation, its importance, components, timeline (see Figure 2), and progress ratings, for the information of the RSC.

Figure 2. PIR Timeline

5.2 The presentation particularly elaborated on the request made to the six AMS to submit co-financing commitment letters as part of the reporting of implementation progress, including RPMU's effort to establish a tracking mechanism to monitor if the co-financing commitments are realized and if new contributions are recorded.

5.3 The RPMU emphasized the shared responsibility in delivering project outputs, including the PIR preparation and in ensuring that a Satisfactory rating is achieved, as discussed and agreed during the 1st RSC meeting.

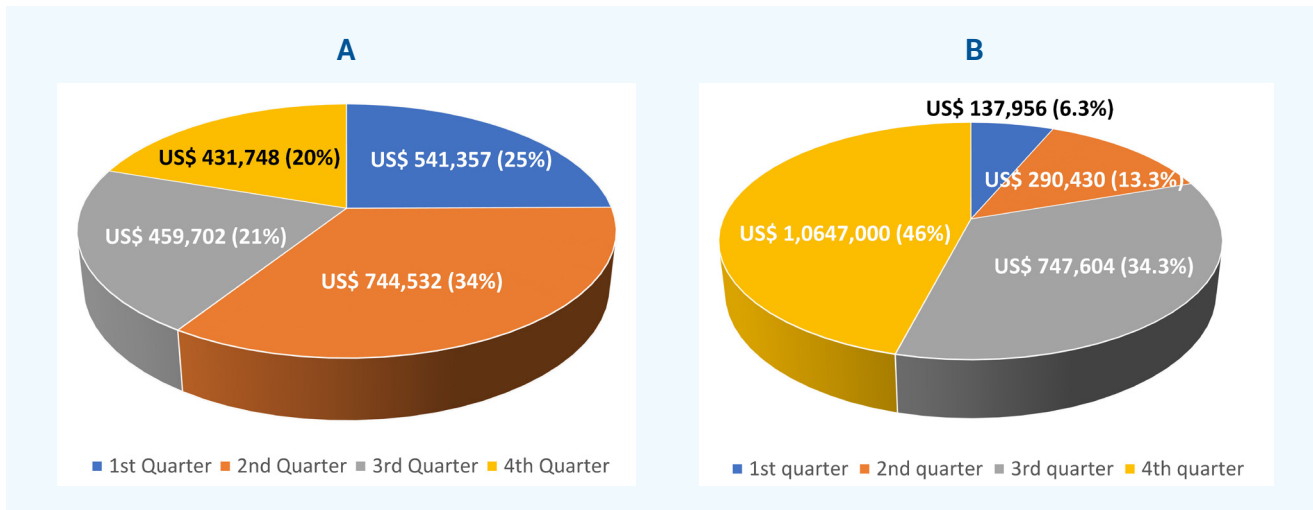
5.4 Discussion Highlight

- Dr. Keita Furukawa of EASPC EC indicated that the progress ratings for the PIR are well-defined. While reporting on the current status of the project is important, past trends and future projections are also important indicators and should be considered in assessing progress.

6. Review of 2024 Work Plan and Budget and Proposed 2025 Work Plan and Budget

6.1 Ms. Nancy Bermas presented the approved 2024 budget, the level of fund utilization as of end of Quarter 2 and the reprofiled budget for the remaining two Quarters of 2024. Level of fund utilization for the first two quarters of 2024 is 19.7 per cent of the 2024 budget (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Approved 2024 budget allocation per quarter (A) and actual fund utilization for Q1-Q2 and reprofiled budget for Q3-Q4 (B)



6.2 The reprofiled budget for Quarter 3 amounting to USD 747,604 and for Quarter 4 amounting to USD 1,064,000 represent 34 and 46 percent, respectively, of the 2024 budget. The allocations, which are higher compared to Quarters 1 and 2, will cover key activities for the three project components at the regional level and project management and in the six AMS, with anticipation of project start up in Indonesia, Malaysia and Vietnam starting Quarter 3.

6.3 Ms. Bermas also presented the proposed 2025 work plan and budget amounting to USD 2,160,937 covering Components 1-4 and project management. Component 4 in particular includes budget for the Mid-term Review. Ms. Bermas indicated that the 2025 work plan and budget is subject to adjustments based on the level of fund utilization and completed activities by end of December 2024.

6.4 Discussion Highlights and Decision

- The RPMU noted the request from Malaysia for each AMS to review the budget allocations for 2024 in consideration of some delay in project implementation and the planned activities until December 2024. RPMU to provide the budget breakdown for the 2024 reprofiled budget, also in response to the ASEAN Secretariat’s suggestion, including the 2025 budget with clarification that the 2025 workplan and budget was developed with the expectation that the planned activities for 2024 would have been completed and

the activities lined up for 2025 are based on the identified activities under Year 3 in the Project Document.

- The RSC noted the suggestion from Lao PDR for the project to consider extending its support to the non-participating AMS to participate in project activities such as in regional training, learning exchanges, forums and conferences and other regional events. The request has budgetary implications, thus the RPMU will review the regional budget and discuss with UNDP the opportunity to engage the non-participating AMS in regional activities.
- The RSC noted the ASEC's intervention on the timeline of the consultation process for the review, publication and launching of the SORB reports and the involvement of the AWGWRM in the consultation process. RPMU will provide information on the timeline on the development of the SORB reporting system to the AWGWRM. It was clarified that the SORB Guidebook, considered as a work in progress and will be subject to further refinement based on the experience of the AMS in developing the SORB reports for their priority river basins, has been drafted and RPMU can provide copies to the AWGWRM and ASEC for review. The launching during the IRBM Forum of the 2024 East Asian Seas Congress in November 2024 primarily aims to introduce the SORB reporting system and promote its application across the ten AMS.
- The RSC adopted the reprofiled 2024 work plan and budget and the proposed 2025 work plan and budget, as presented and subject to further adjustments based on the level of implementation in 2024.

7. Date and Venue of Third RSC Meeting

- 7.1 Mr. Oudomsack Philavong, Chair of the AWGWRM, informed the RSC that the convening of the 3rd RSC meeting and the 25th AWGWRM meeting will follow the same arrangements as the 2nd RSC meeting.
- 7.2 Mr. Philavong further informed the RSC that the convening of the 25th AWGWRM meeting will be discussed during the Closed Session of the 24th AWGWRM meeting, scheduled on July 3, 2024. The decision and recommendation on the hosting of the 25th AWGWRM Meeting will be communicated to UNDP and PRF.

8. Meeting Recommendations and Next Steps

- 8.1 Ms. Daisy Padayao presented the discussion highlights, key recommendations and decisions from the meeting.
- 8.2 The RSC was informed of the following schedule for the preparation and dissemination of the proceedings of the 2nd RSC meeting:
- Circulation of draft proceedings: August 2, 2024
 - Review of the draft proceedings: August 5-16, 2024
 - Circulation of final version of the proceedings: August 23, 2024
- 8.3 The RSC noted Lao PDR's suggestion to include a site visit in the 3rd RSC meeting to serve as a learning exchange and experience sharing platform among the members on IRBM implementation.
- 8.4 The RSC also noted Indonesia's intervention on the schedule of the project start-up in Quarter 3 of 2024 in consideration of the time required to complete the internal consultations and the review of the Memorandum of Agreement involving various departments of MOEF.
- 8.5 The RSC noted the following recommendations and decision:
- RPMU to continue coordinating and providing support to the six AMS to facilitate project approval, subject to national processes in Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines and Vietnam and accelerate project implementation in Cambodia, Lao PDR and the Philippines.
 - AMS to identify additional steps to increase the level of financial delivery as the project is approaching its mid-point in 2025 where the expected financial delivery is 50 percent of the total project budget.
 - Inclusion of the project risks and SES in the agenda of the succeeding RSC meetings as risk management is a critical component of the project cycle that contributes to the overall success in project implementation.
 - RPMU to provide the budget breakdown for the 2024 reprofiled budget including the 2025 budget with clarification that the 2025 workplan and budget was developed with the expectation that the planned activities for 2024 would have been completed and the activities lined up for 2025 are based on the identified activities under Year 3 in the Project Document.

- Extend support to the non-participating AMS to participate in regional activities, i.e., regional training, learning exchanges, forums and conferences and other regional events, subject to further consultations with UNDP in consideration of budget availability from the regional component.
- Involvement of the AWGWRM in the consultation process for the SORB reporting prior to publication of the SORB Guidebook and reports and their launching during the IRBM Forum of the 2024 East Asian Seas Congress in November 2024. The launching primarily aims to introduce the SORB reporting system and promote its application across the ten AMS. RPMU to provide available SORB documents to AWGWRM and ASEC for review.
- Adoption of the reprofiled 2024 work plan and budget and the proposed 2025 work plan and budget, as presented, with the 2025 work plan and budget still subject to further adjustments based on the level of project implementation in 2024.
- Convening of the 3rd RSC meeting and the 25th AWGWRM meeting will follow the same arrangements as the 2nd RSC meeting. The decision and recommendation on the hosting of the 25th AWGWRM Meeting, which will be discussed during the Closed Session of the 24th AWGWRM Meeting, will be communicated to UNDP and PRF.

8.6 The RSC noted the above recommendations and adopted the key decision points and requested RPMU to record them in the minutes of the meeting and shared for review and approval by the RSC.

Closing of the Meeting

- i. Mr. Oudomsack Philavong thanked Mr. Gerd Trogemann for co-chairing the meeting and the members of the RSC for their valuable contribution and for sharing their insights to facilitate project implementation. Mr. Philavong recognized that the dedication and expertise of the RSC members have been instrumental in the successful conclusion of the meeting. He added that significant progress has been made and he expressed confidence that with a clear work and financial plan for 2024 and 2025, more progress will be reported in the 3rd RSC meeting. He concluded with a word of thanks to UNDP and PRF for their support to the AWGWRM.
- ii. The 2nd RSC meeting of the IRBM Project was adjourned at 12:30 pm on 02 July 2024.

Appendix A. List of Participants

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Appendix B. Annotated Agenda

SECOND REGIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

GEF/UNDP/ASEAN PROJECT ON REDUCING POLLUTION AND PRESERVING ENVIRONMENTAL FLOWS IN THE EAST ASIAN SEAS THROUGH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INTEGRATED RIVER BASIN MANAGEMENT (IRBM) IN ASEAN COUNTRIES

Siem Reap, Cambodia
02 July 2024

PROVISIONAL ANNOTATED AGENDA

0900 – 0915	Opening of the Meeting Welcoming Remarks Mr. Roath Sith Deputy Director General Directorate of Environmental Protection Ministry of Environment Cambodia Opening Remarks Mr. Oudomsack Philavong AWGWRM Chairperson Director General, Department of Water Resources Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Lao PDR Remarks Mr. Gerd Trogemann Manager Regional Programme and Global Policy Network UNDP Bangkok Regional Hub for Asia and the Pacific
0915 – 0920	1.0 Adoption of the Meeting Agenda
0920 – 0925	2.0 Matters Arising from the Ad-Hoc RSC Meeting The meeting will review the decisions and recommendations from the Ad-Hoc RSC meeting held on 24 November 2023 and the status/actions taken.

0925 – 1100	<p>3.0 Project Implementation Progress, Key Challenges and Strategies to Address the Challenges</p> <p>The six participating ASEAN Member States will present the progress made in project implementation since the conduct of the Ad-Hoc RSC meeting in November 2024, including the challenges encountered and strategies to address them.</p> <p>The Regional Project Management Unit (RPMU) will present the accomplishments to date at the regional level, highlighting early good practices and progress against the overall project objectives and outcomes.</p>
1100 – 1115	<p>4.0 Review of Project Risks and Mitigating Measures</p> <p>The RPMU will introduce the project risks, particularly those related to the operational aspects of the project, including activities on gender and social and environmental safeguards that have been initiated at the regional level and plans at the basin level to facilitate gender mainstreaming and manage the risks.</p> <p>The Chairperson will highlight the importance of addressing the project risks as presented and seek the RSC members support to institute measures in a timely manner to address the risks.</p>
1115 – 1130	<p>5.0 Project Implementation Report</p> <p>The RPMU will introduce the PIR, its importance, the key contents and requirements, the process and timeline of completion.</p> <p>The Chairperson will encourage the RSC members to support the PIR preparation process by providing information to RPMU where required for its timely completion and refinement.</p>
1130 – 1210	<p>6.0 Review of 2024 Workplan and Budget and Proposed 2025 Workplan and Budget</p> <p>The RPMU will present the level of fund utilization as of June 2024 and the reprofiled budget for the remaining quarters of 2024.</p> <p>A proposed 2025 workplan and budget will also be presented for review and approval by the RSC.</p>

1210 – 1215

7.0 Date and Venue of 3rd RSC Meeting

The Chairperson will inform the meeting that the 3rd RSC meeting will be convened alongside the 25th AWGWRM meeting similar to the current arrangement.

The Chairperson will inform the meeting that the results of the Closed Meeting of the 24th AWGWRM where the host country and planned schedule for the 25th AWGWRM Meeting will be discussed will be communicated to UNDP and RPMU.

1215 – 1225

8.0 Meeting Recommendations and Next Steps

The Chairperson will invite RPMU to provide a summary of the key decisions and recommendations that were generated from the discussions, for review and approval of the RSC members.

The RPMU will also outline the timeline of preparation and dissemination of the meeting proceedings to the RSC members.

The Chairperson will inform the meeting that the recommendations from the 2nd RSC meeting will be presented at the Open Session of the 24th Annual Meeting on 3 July 2024.

1225 – 1230

Closing of the Meeting**Closing Remarks****Mr. Oudomsack Philavong**

AWGWRM Chairperson

Director General, Department of Water Resources

Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Lao PDR

